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A KEY
TO
THE OLD TESTAMENT,
AND
APOCRYPHA :
OR,
AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR SEVERAL BOOKS,
OF THE CONTENTS AND AUTHORS,
AND OF THE
TIMES IN WHICH THEY WERE RESPECTIVELY WRITTEN.

BY
✓
ROBERT GRAY, D. D.
LATE LORD BISHOP OF BRISTOL.

TENTH EDITION,
REVISED.

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[DEDICATION PREFIXED TO THE PRECEDING EDITION.]

TO THE

REV. JOSEPH HOLDEN POTT,

ARCHDEACON OF LONDON, AND VICAR OF KENSINGTON.

IN looking back to those sentiments of regard which I addressed to you in the former impressions of this work, it is gratifying to me to find the friendship of my earlier days confirmed by the reflections of maturer age; and to renew, at a more advanced period of life, the expression of the most lively feelings of attachment and respect.

The repeated proofs of approbation which this volume has experienced, have led me to endeavour to render the present edition more deserving of the public sanction, and more useful as well to students in divinity as to the general reader. With this view I have introduced additional remarks and corrections in various parts of the work, and have carefully revised the autho-

rities produced, noting, as accurately as possible, the references, and accommodating them to the best editions, particularly to those of the Fathers, and early writers.

The extensive encouragement which the work has received, will afford, I trust, some subject of satisfaction to you ; especially from the recollection of the favourable opinion which you expressed on its appearance, conferring a value upon the first fruits of my application to those studies which you had assiduously encouraged me to cultivate ; and countenancing an early tribute of veneration for those Scriptures, of which, by your learned and judicious remarks, you have often pointed out the perfections, and of which you uniformly illustrate the beneficial influence by the distinguished example of your conversation and life.

I remain, my dear Sir,

with very sincere regard,

Your most faithful friend,

R. BRISTOL.

*Palace, Bristol,
Jan. 15, 1829.*

P R E F A C E.

THE useful Key to the New Testament, by Doctor Percy, Bishop of Dromore, suggested the idea of the present work, first published in 1790. It was apprehended that a similar assistance to the perusal of the Books of the Old Testament, would prove equally convenient to those who might not have either leisure or opportunities to consult larger publications, for scattered information. A difference in the description of the books here treated of, has compelled the author to adopt a more diffusive and discursive method of conducting his subjects than that which is followed by the learned prelate. The uncertainty of the dates and authors of some books, the objections to opinions generally established, and the mixed character, and miscellaneous contents of the works considered, have necessarily occasioned complicated and extended discussions.

The author was desirous of exhibiting in one point of view, the probable period of each book, the character and design of its writer, and the proofs of, or grounds for disputing its inspiration. He wished to

present the reader with a general sketch of the respective importance of each, of its intrinsic pretensions and external sanctions; and to impart, in a compendious description, whatever might contribute to illustrate its history and contents. This he has done in a manner as concise as the subject would well admit, considering that it was designed to prefix general information and remarks as introductory, and separately to examine such questions as were immediately connected with the particular scope of the individual book. He judged it also improper to deliver opinions, without stating the reasons on which they were founded, or to adopt decisions on disputed or doubtful points, without producing, at least, the most considerable objections that might be urged against them, lest the reader should be led to decide on partial grounds.

Since the books often contain passages of obscure interpretation, and doubtful import; also dates, names, and other particulars, upon the explanation of which their character for antiquity and authority must in some measure rest, it was impossible to avoid critical and chronological questions. In consequence of these, the notes have been increased in number and extent, beyond what was at first intended. The reader will, however, hereby be saved the trouble of referring to commentators; or, if unwilling to acquiesce in the decision adopted, he may readily find the foundation and authorities on which it was established.

As the inspiration of the canonical books was to be

proved, it was often requisite to point out the accomplishment of prophecy; which, therefore, the author has done, in the most signal instances, though commonly by reference only and cursory observation. He presumes, however, that he has thereby often unfolded an interesting scene, or opened a wide field of instructive inquiry. The importance, likewise, of some discoveries and remarks which learned commentators have imparted, and the interest which sometimes attaches to ancient Versions and Paraphrases have, in some instances, tempted the Author to introduce particulars that may be thought too minute for a general and compendious Introduction; but he has usually endeavoured to confine himself to such comments as contribute to general illustration, or are explanatory of passages immediately subjected to the reader's attention. He apprehends, that if the reader should occasionally discover observations which reflect only an oblique or partial light on the sacred volume, he will not be displeased, even though it should appear that a larger space is thereby allotted to some books than their comparative importance may seem to justify.

It was thought expedient, also, occasionally to advert to those popular mistakes and light objections which float in society, and operate on weak minds to the prejudice of the sacred books, as the author was conscious that fairly to state, was in some measure to refute them, and that they often produce more than their due effect because indistinctly viewed. In consequence of this

design, he may, perhaps, be thought to have introduced remarks too obvious and trivial. The sincere and dispassionate inquirer after truth, who has deliberately weighed the evidence on which the Scriptures rest, cannot readily believe that a passage partially considered, a misconception of a revealed design, or a fancied inconsistency with pre-conceived opinions, should be allowed to affect the character, or diminish the influence of the sacred books, established as their authority is by the connected and incontrovertible evidence of successive ages: but experience fully proves that these are the foundations on which ignorance and infidelity ground their disrespect for the inspired writings.

The author has been cautious in treating of the canonical and apocryphal books, to discriminate their respective pretensions with accuracy; since, however valuable the latter may be considered for their general excellence, it is necessary to keep inviolate, and free from all intermixture, that consecrated canon in which the holy oracles were preserved by the Jews, which was stamped as infallible by the testimony of Christ and his apostles, and which, in the first and purest ages of the Church, was revered (together with the inspired books of the New Testament) as the only source of revealed wisdom, the invaluable gift of Providence, our guide in all the vicissitudes of life, our chart of direction, through faith in the atonement of Christ, to a state of eternal happiness.

The whole design of the author has been to assist

the reader in forming a just conception of the character of the Old Testament, and of those uninspired books which are reputed to have been written under the first dispensation; and to supply such introductory intelligence, as might enable others to read them with pleasure and advantage. He lays claim to no praise, but that of having brought into a regular form such information as he could collect from various works, to illustrate the Book of Divine Wisdom. He acknowledges himself in the most unrestrained terms, to have borrowed from all authors of established reputation, such materials as he could find, after having deliberately considered and impartially collated their accounts. He has appropriated such obvious information as was to be collected from those writers who are universally known to have treated on the sacred books¹; and he has endeavoured farther to enrich and substantiate his accounts by diligent and extensive research. He has not wished to conceal the sources from which he has drawn his information, nor has he scrupled in some instances to employ the words of the writers whom he has consulted. The authorities (which have been frequently multiplied with a design to afford assistance to those who might wish to pursue the subjects in contemplation) have been cautiously reviewed and corrected in the present edition, especially on important and controverted points.

¹ As Josephus, Eusebius, Jerom, Grotius, Huet, Calmet, Du Pin, Patrick, Lowth, &c. &c.

If, in some instances, the author should be found to have been misled in inquiries carried up to remote periods; or, if in a miscellaneous work, composed and published in early life, there be defects which at a maturer age he has not detected, he trusts that they are of little moment, and have no tendency to diminish the reverence due to those holy writings, which are themselves free from error.

An awful apprehension, and a prayer for forgiveness for involuntary mistakes, must ever become those who attempt to illustrate the Book of Life, or to bring forward, with defective views, the evidence that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and "able to make men wise unto salvation."

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ERRATA.

In the Text.

Page 186. line 1. for "Ahaz" read "Ahab."
 — 351. — 5. after under insert our.

In the Notes.

Page 5. note 2. line 2. for liii. read lii.
 — 11. — 5. — 2. omit xxix. 7.
 — 44. — 3. — 1. for Numbers xxxiii. 4. read xxxiii. 2.
 — 45. — 6. — 2. for Heb. xi. 23. read xi. 28.
 — 46. — 3. — 1. for Acts xxvii. read xxviii.
 — 48. — 4. — 1. for Ezra iv. 8. read vii. 6.
 — 56. — 6. — 2. for 1565 read 1655.
 — 103. — 6. — 1. for Exod. xii. 4. read xii. 46.
 — 177. — 7. — 1. omit 25, 26.
 — 235. — 6. — 1. for ii. 33. read iii. 33.
 — 241. — 6. — 8. for xliii. 11. read xlii. 11.
 — 261. — 3. — 3. for cxv. read xcv.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Bible, which in its original import implies only The Book¹, is a word appropriated by way of eminence, to that collection of the Scriptures, which have at different times been composed by persons divinely inspired. It contains the several revelations delivered from God to mankind for their instruction. Those communicated before the birth of Christ, are included under that division of the Bible, which is distinguished by the title of the Old Testament², and of that division only it is here meant to treat. The Old Testament comprehends all those sacred books which were written by the descendants of Israel, a people selected by God for important purposes to “be a Kingdom of Priests, and an Holy Nation³.” Among this people successive prophets and inspired writers were appointed by God

¹ Βιβλίον vel βιβλία, Liber, from Βίβλος, an Egyptian reed, the Papyrus, of the rind of which paper was made. Herodotus, lib. v. c. 58. p. 400. edit. Wesseling, 1763. The Bible is by the Jews called Mikra, Lecture : so the Koran means the reading.

² Testament signifies covenant, agreeably to the import of the Hebrew word Berith. Hieronymus in Malach. cap. ii. ver. 5. tom. iii. p. 1817. edit. Paris, 1704.

³ Exod. xix. 6. xxxiii. 16. Levit. xx. 24. 26. Psalm cxlvii. 19. Rom. iii. 2. ix. 4.

to impart such prophecies and instructions as were instrumental to the designs of his providence. As these scriptures were produced, they were admitted into the sacred volume, which by gradual accumulation, at length increased to its present size. These being delivered to the Hebrews, in their own language ⁴, with every mark that could characterize divine revelations, were received with reverence, as inspired by the Holy Spirit, and preserved with the most anxious care and attention. Such only were accepted, as proceeded from persons unquestionably invested with the prophetic character ⁵, or evidently authorized by a divine commission, who acted under the sanction of public appointment and miraculous support. The books which contained the precepts of the prophets, contained also the proofs of their inspiration, and the testimonies to their veracity. By recording contemporary events, the writers appealed to well-known evidence of their authority, of their impartiality, and of their adherence to truth; and every succeeding prophet confirmed the character of his predecessor, by relating the accomplishment of prophecy in the history of his own period, or bore testimony to his pretensions, by repeating and explaining his predictions.

To the writings of these inspired persons, other productions were afterwards annexed, on account of their valuable contents, and instructive tendency, though

⁴ The Hebrew language, if not the first language of man, seems at least to have higher pretensions to antiquity than any other. The books of the Old Testament, are the only writings now extant in pure Hebrew.

⁵ Josephus cont. Apion. lib. i. § 7. vol. ii. p. 1333. edit. Hudson, 1720.

their claims to inspiration have been justly rejected. Such only as were undeniably dictated by the Spirit of God, were considered by the Jews as canonical⁶, and such only are received by us as affording a rule of faith and doctrine. The contents of the first division of the Bible are, therefore, distinguished into two classes. The first containing the books of acknowledged inspiration; the second comprising those which are entitled Apocryphal, as being of dubious or suspected character and authority. The latter will be spoken of in a proper place, since in the present preliminary dissertation, it is purposed to treat of such only as are canonical, and to trace a short sketch of their history in a general outline; a particular account of each individual book being reserved for a separate chapter.

Though the books of the Old Testament are not always chronologically arranged according to the order in which they were written, yet the Pentateuch was probably the first of those productions which are contained in the inspired volume.

These five books, written by the hand of Moses, and consequently free from error, were secured as a sacred deposit in the tabernacle, where the ark of the covenant was placed⁷; and were kept there, as well during the journey through the wilderness, as for some time

⁶ *Κανὼν*, Canon, may be interpreted, a rule or defined list; see Athanasii Opera, tom. ii. p. 55. edit. Paris, 1627. Athanasius styles the Sacred Books, “ὁρισμένα καὶ κεκανονισμένα.” See also Hieronymus adv. Rufinum, tom. iv. lib. iii. p. 444. edit. Paris, 1706. St. Jerom speaks of the Sacred Books of Scripture as delivered by the Apostles “ad plenissimum fidei instrumentum Ecclesiis Christi.”

⁷ Deut. xxxi. 26.

after at Jerusalem. To the same sanctuary were consigned, as they were successively produced, all those historical⁸ and prophetical books, which were written from the time of Joshua, to that of David, including their own works; during which period a series of prophets flourished in regular succession. Solomon having afterwards erected a temple to the honour of God⁹, appointed that in future the sacred books should be deposited in this holy receptacle, and enriched the collection by the inspired productions of his own pen. After him a line of illustrious prophets continued to denounce vengeance against the disobedience of the Hebrew nation, and to predict the calamities which that disobedience must inevitably produce. Jonah, Amos, Isaiah, Hosea, Joel, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Obadiah, successively flourished before the destruction of the temple, and contributed, by their unerring predictions, to demonstrate the attributes and designs of Providence, and to enlarge the volume of inspired wisdom by invaluable additions.

About 420¹ years after its foundation, the temple being rifled and burnt by Nebuchadnezzar, the original manuscripts of the law and of the prophetical writings, must have been removed; and were possibly carried to Babylon, except indeed we suppose, that the part of

⁸ The books do not stand in the order in which they were written; they were perhaps not arranged at first according to dates, or they might have been accidentally transposed in the manuscript rolls: in different versions, they are differently placed. Dupin, *Dissertation Préliminaire*.

The Temple was dedicated about A.M. 3000.

¹ Josephus says 470, others 428. Usher 424 years. It was destroyed about 585 years before Christ. *Antiq. lib. x. ch. viii. p. 449.*

the Hebrew nation which remained at Jerusalem, obtained permission, or found means to retain them². Those Hebrews who were dispersed in the captivity, probably used such copies as had been previously distributed; though Daniel, who refers to the law³, might by his interest with the Babylonish kings, have procured access to the original, if we suppose it to have been transferred to Babylon. Within the seventy years, during which the Jews were detained in captivity, were composed the affecting lamentations of Jeremiah, the consolatory prophecies of Ezekiel, and the history and prophecies of Daniel.

On the accession of Cyrus to the throne of Persia, the Jews being released from their captivity, returned to Jerusalem about A.M. 3468, having doubtless procured or recovered the original books of the law and of the prophets, with a design to place them in the temple, which after much opposition from the Samaritans, they rebuilt in about twenty years, being encouraged to persevere in this pious work, by the exhortations of Haggai and Zechariah: they also restored the divine worship according to the law. About fifty years after the temple was rebuilt, Ezra, who since the return from Babylon, had been engaged in restoring the Jewish Church, is related by tradition to have made, in conjunction with the great synagogue, a collection of the sacred writings⁴; and being assisted

² In the account of the things carried to Babylon, no mention is made of the sacred books. 2 Kings xxv. 2 Chron. xxxvi. Jerem. liii.

³ Dan. ix. 11. 13. See also Ezra vii. 14. and Jerem. xvii. 19—21. xxxii. 22, 23.

⁴ Nehem. viii. 1. 3. 9. Josephus cont. Apion. lib. i. sect. viii. p. 1333. Tract. Megil. in Gemar. cap. iii. Hieronymus, tom. iii.

by the Holy Spirit, he was enabled to discriminate what was authentic and divine, and to reject such parts as rested but on false pretensions; this collection was, therefore, free from error, and rescued from all accidental corruptions. It has been maintained, indeed, that as a long residence in Chaldea, during which the Jews were dispersed and separated from each other, had so far precluded the use of the Hebrew letters, that they were almost forgotten and superseded by those of Chaldea, Ezra, partly in compliance with custom, and partly to differ from the Samaritans, (which obnoxious sect employed the old Hebrew letters), substituted the Chaldean or square letters, which we now call the Hebrew, for those which prevailed previously to the captivity⁵, as we changed our old black letter for the Roman characters. There have, indeed, been some disputes on this subject, but this opinion seems to be the best supported⁶.

p. 342. edit. Antverp. 1678. Hilarius, Prolog. in Lib. Psalmorum, p. 4. edit. Paris, 1693. Augustinus de Mirabilibus Sacræ Scripturæ, tom. iii. lib. ii. cap. 33. edit. Paris, 1689. Buxtorf Tiberius sive Commentarius Masorethicus, cap. xi. p. 26. edit. Basil, 1620. Theodor. Præf. in Psalm. p. 396. edit. Sirmondi Lutetiæ Parisiorum, 1642. Huetii Demonstratio Evangelica, Propos. 4. cap. 9. p. 139; see also p. 261, 262, &c. edit. Paris, 1679. Prideaux's Connection, part i. book v. Dupin, Dissert. Prelim.

⁵ Some assert also, that Ezra introduced the points or characters which serve to mark the Hebrew vowels; others maintain, that these are as ancient as the language; and a third class, that they were invented by the doctors of the school at Tiberias, generally called the Masorites, about 500 years after Christ, or as some say later. The Masorites seem to have been a succession of critics, professing a traditionary science of reading the Scriptures, as the Cabalists did of interpreting them.

⁶ This account is founded on a Jewish tradition generally re-

To this genuine collection of Ezra, were afterwards annexed his own sacred writings, as well as those of Nehemiah and of Malachi. These were probably inserted into the canon by Simon the Just, who presided over the great synagogue⁷, and by this addition was completed the canon of the Old Testament: for, from Malachi, no prophet arose till the time of John the Baptist, who, as it were, connected the two covenants, and of whom Malachi prophesied, that he should precede the great day of the Lord⁸.

This canon of the Old Testament was, by the Jews, computed to contain twenty-two books⁹, a number analogous to that of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and corresponding with the catalogue of those which are received by our Church as canonical. With the Jews, however, Judges and Ruth were reckoned but

ceived, and is related on the testimonies of Eusebius and St. Jerom; but those who maintain that the square were the ancient Hebrew letters, have attempted to invalidate these authorities. The canon, however, was certainly composed about the time of Ezra, if not by himself. Vid. Euseb. Chron. ad A.M. 4740. Hieron. Præf. ad 2 Reg. Com. in Ezekiel, in Prol. Gal. et Sixt. Senens. lib. ii. p. 59. edit. Coloniae. Morini, Exercit. Eccles. in Pentateuchum Samaritanum, lib. ii. p. 98. edit. Paris, 1631. Also Scaliger, Bochart, Casaubon, Vossius, Grotius, Walton, and Capellus.

⁷ The great synagogue is a term applied by the Jews to a succession of Elders, supposed to have amounted to one hundred and twenty, who had the government of the Jewish Church after the Captivity. They are said to have superintended and closed the canon of the Scriptures. See Prideaux's Connection, An. 291, part ii. book i.

⁸ Malach. iv. 5.

⁹ Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. i. c. xi. sect. 5. p. 483—5. cont. Apion. lib. i. sect. 8. vol. ii. p. 1333. Sixt. Senens. lib. i. and ii. Epiphanius, &c.

as one book ; as likewise the two books of Samuel, those of Kings and of Chronicles were respectively united into single books ; Ezra and Nehemiah were also joined together, as the prophecies and lamentation of Jeremiah were taken under one head ; so that if we consider the twelve minor prophets as they were comprehended in the Jewish canon, as one book, the number of the books will be exactly twenty-two. If the Prophets wrote any other books, they are now lost ; but as no more were admitted into the canon, we have reason to suppose, that no more were inspired, though many other books are mentioned and referred to in the Scriptures, which having no pretensions to inspiration, were never received into the sacred list ¹. These twenty-two books have an unquestionable title to be considered as the genuine productions of those authors, to whom they are severally assigned. They contain prophecies and every other intrinsic proof of their divine origin ; they were received as authentic by the

¹ Orig. Hom. i. in Cant. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. cap. xxxviii. quest. 42. in Numb. It has been said, likewise, that some passages are cited by the Evangelists, as from the prophetic writings, which are not extant in them, as in Matt. ii. 23 ; but St. Matthew might here allude to Judges xiii. 5, or to Isaiah xi. 1, where, according to St. Jerom, "A branch shall go out of his root" might be translated, "A Nazarite shall grow from his root," or he might refer to the prophetic accounts in general, which had foretold, that Christ should be consecrated to God as all the Nazarites were. The Evangelists usually cite more according to the sense than to the words, and they sometimes perhaps allude to well-known traditional prophecies, "to that which was spoken by the prophets." See other instances in Eph. v. 14. 2 Tim. iii. 8. James iv. 5. Jude 14, 15 ; which refer to passages not now extant, or to traditional relation. Hieron. de Opt. Gen. Interpr. vol. i. p. 122.

Hebrews, and pronounced to be inspired oracles by the Evangelical writers, who cite them without any intimation of defect or corruption. There was not, indeed, any period at which, if fabricated, they could have been imposed upon the Jews as the works of the authors whose names they severally bear. They were, likewise, considered as exclusively canonical in the Christian Church, during the four first centuries, after which, some provincial councils attempted to increase the number by some apocryphal books, which, however, they annexed only as of secondary authority, till the council of Trent pronounced them to be equally infallible in doctrine and truth².

The Jews divided the sacred books into three classes³. The first, which they called the law, contained, as was before observed, the five books of Moses. The second originally included thirteen books, which they considered as the works of the prophets. The third comprised four books, called by the Jews Chetubim, and by the Greeks, Hagiographa; these are conceived to have been the Psalms, and the three books of Solomon⁴. The Scriptures were so divided in the time of Josephus⁵, probably without any respect to superiority of inspiration, but for distinction, and commodious arrangement. From the time of St. Jerom, the second class has been deprived of some books⁶ which have been thrown into the third class, and the Hebrew doctors have invented

² Preface to the Apocryphal Books.

³ Prolog. to Eccelus. Philo de Vitâ Contemp. p. 691.

⁴ Sixt. Senen. Bibliotheca Sancta, lib. ii. p. 47. edit. Colon. and Vitrin. Observat. Sac. lib. vi. cap. vi. p. 313.

⁵ Joseph. cont. Apion, lib. i. § 8. p. 1333.

⁶ Job, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, 2 Books of Chronicles.

many fanciful refinements concerning the nature and degrees of inspiration, which are to be ascribed to the books of each class respectively. They assign an higher authority to the books of the two first divisions, though they attribute also the writings included in the third class to the suggestion of the sacred Spirit⁷. It would be idle to trouble the reader with the discussion of these and such like rabbinical conceits, and it may be sufficient here to remark upon this subject, that though the Scripture mentions different modes by which God communicated his instructions to the prophets, and particularly attributes a superior degree of eminence to Moses, yet that these differences, and this distinction, however they may affect the dignity of the minister employed, cannot be supposed to increase or to lessen the certainty of the things imparted. Whatever God condescended to communicate to mankind by his servants must be equally infallible and true⁸, whether derived from immediate converse with him, from an external voice, or from dreams or visions, or lastly from the internal and enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit. The mode of communication, where the agency of Providence is established, can in no respect exalt or depreciate the intrinsic character of the thing revealed.

Other divisions, besides that already mentioned, were afterwards adopted, and the order of the books was sometimes changed, as design or accident might produce a transposition; but no addition or diminution

⁷ Maimon. *Mor. Nevoch*, c. xxxv. p. 290. edit. Buxtorf, 1629; and Smith on Prophecy, also *Misn. Jud.* c. iii. n. 5. Bava Bathra, cap. i.

⁸ 2 Tim. iii. 16. 2 Pet. i. 19. 21.

whatever was permitted to be made among the Jews⁹; to them were committed the oracles of God, and they were faithful guardians¹; “never any man,” says Josephus, “hath dared to add to, or to diminish from, or to alter aught in them²; though other books were written, which deserved not the same credit, because there was no certain succession of prophets, from the time of Artaxerxes; and it was a maxim, ingrafted into the Jews in their youth, to esteem these writings as the oracles of God, and remaining constant in their veneration, willingly to die for them if necessary.” Thus were they consigned to the reverent acceptance of posterity, and consecrated by the approbation and testimony of Christ himself, who stamped as authentic, and as infallibly to be accomplished, the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms³ (the Psalms, comprehending under that title, the Hagiographa)⁴; the apostles likewise confirmed the same⁵.

Besides the great temple at Jerusalem, many synagogues were founded after the return from the capti-

⁹ Hieron. Præf. in Lib. Reg. Bava Bathra, cap. i. Maimon. in Tad. Chan. p. 2. f. 95. and R. Gedalias in Scalsch hakkab. f. 67.

¹ Deut. xxix. 29.

² Deut. iv. 2. and Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. § 8. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. cap. ix. x. p. 84-5. Præp. Evangel. lib. viii. p. 84-5. edit. Paris, 1659.

³ Matt. v. 17, 18. xxi. 42. xxii. 29. xxvi. 54. Luke xvi. 16. xxiv. 27. 44. John i. 45. v. 39.

⁴ Philo, de Vit. Contemp. lib. vi. Joseph. contra Apion. lib. i. § 8. Hieron. in Præf. in Dan. Opera, tom. iii. p. 1071. edit. Paris, 1704. Epiphani. Homil. xxix. cap. 7.

⁵ Acts iii. 18. xviii. 28. xxiv. 14. xxvi. 22. 27. xxviii. 23. xxix. 7. Rom. iii. 2. xv. 4. Heb. i. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 6. 2 Pet. i. 19. Acts viii. 32. Rom. iv. 3. ix. 17. x. 4.

vity, and furnished by the industry of the rulers of the church with copies of this authentic collection of the Scriptures, so that though Antiochus Epiphanes, in the persecution which he carried on against the religion of the Jews, tore in pieces and afterwards burnt probably the sacred original of Ezra, or at least such copies as he could procure⁶; still, as faithful manuscripts existed in all parts, the malevolence of his intention was baffled by God's providence; and Judas Maccabeus, when he had recovered the city and purified the temple, procured for it a perfect and entire collection of the Scriptures, or perhaps deposited therein that which had belonged to his father Mattathias⁷, and doubtless supplied such synagogues with fresh copies as had been plundered during the persecution. Many of these, however, must have perished with the synagogues that were destroyed by the armies of Vespasian and Titus, though the religious veneration of the Jews for their Scriptures rescued every copy that could be saved from the general destruction which overwhelmed their country, as the Scriptures afforded them considerable consolation in all their afflictions. Josephus himself, we are informed, obtained a copy from Titus⁸, when the other Jewish books were destroyed, and the authentic volume, which till this final demolition had been deposited in the temple, was carried in triumph to Rome, and placed with the purple veils in the temple of

⁶ 1 Mac. i. 57. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. cap. v. p. 553. De Bell. Jud. lib. vii. c. iii. p. 1299. edit. Hudson, 1720. Sulpit. Sev. Hist. Sac. lib. ii.

⁷ 1 Mac. ii. 48. iii. 48. xii. 9. 2 Mac. ii. 14. viii. 23. xv. 9.

⁸ Joseph. Vit. sect. 75. p. 944-5. edit. Hud.

Peace⁹, so that henceforth no copy of the Hebrew Scriptures was preserved from injury by the vigilance of public guardians, except those transcripts which were kept in the scattered synagogues of foreign and dispersed Jews¹. It is from this time, probably, that errors and corruptions crept into the sacred text. As there was no longer any established standard of correctness by which the fidelity of different copies could be tried, faults and mistakes were insensibly introduced; the carelessness of transcribers occasioned accidental omissions: marginal annotations² were adopted into the text; and the resemblances between different Hebrew letters, of which many are remarkably similar

⁹ De Bell. Jud. lib. vii. cap. v. p. 1306.

¹ The Jewish synagogues in all countries were numerous: wherever the apostles preached they found them; they were established by the direction of the rabbins in every place where there were ten persons of full age and free condition. Vid. Megill. cap. i. sec. 3. Maimon. in Tephill. Lightfoot's Harmony of the New Testament, sect. 17. p. 15. and sect. 55. p. 249. edit. Lond. 1682. Anno Christi, 32. Exercit. in Matt. xviii.

² The Hebrew Bibles have marginal readings, called *keri*, which signifies, that which is read, (the text is called *cetib*, that which is written): these marginal variations are by some ascribed to Ezra, but as they are found in his books, as well as in those which are inserted in the Canon after his time, they seem to be conjectural emendations of corrupted passages by later writers, probably by the great synagogue, or the Masorites; these words amounted to about 1000, and all, except a very few, have been found in the text of different manuscripts. Vide Kennicott's Dissertation on the printed Hebrew Text of the Old Testament. Vitranga, *Observationes Sacræ*, vol. ii. lib. iii. cap. 19. p. 260. edit. Franequeræ, 1691. J. Buxtorfii tractat. de punctorum vocalium et accentuum in lib. v. Test. Hebræorum origine et antiquitate et auctoritate, pars i. cap. v. p. 52. See also Capellus, Morinus, &c.

in form, contributed, with other circumstances too numerous to be here specified, to produce alterations and imperfections in the different copies, which, from the difficulty of collating manuscripts for correction, were necessarily perpetuated.

Hence originated those various readings, and occasional differences which we find in the several manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible, and these differences must have considerably multiplied, since it was enacted by a constitution of the elders, that every man should possess a private copy of the Scriptures. Happily, however, these are seldom important in their nature or consequences, as appears from a collation of those various copies which pious and munificent men have industriously collected; and it should indeed seem to be an especial effect of some peculiar providence, that those passages which relate to faith and doctrine, those which describe the attributes and perfections of God, and the divine and human nature of the Messiah, or which treat concerning our obligations and duty, are in general preserved uniform and uncorrupted. Secure in their integrity from the consistent testimonies of every copy, we may confidently rely on the instructions which they reveal, and stedfastly adhere to the principles which they inculcate.

There could not, indeed, be any temptation for the Jews designedly to corrupt the doctrines of their Scriptures, before the appearance of the Messiah; during the greater part of which time they were watched over by the prophets, and by different sects; and had such a design prevailed since the birth of Christ, the Jews would not have overlooked those passages which so

strongly authenticate our Saviour's pretensions³; indeed such a design must then have been fruitless, since it could not be general, and would have been liable to immediate detection; for as Christianity was built on the foundation of the Old Testament and appealed to the Hebrew Scriptures for its support, wherever the Gospel was received, the law and the prophets were called into notice and esteem, and preserved with as much care and vigilance as prevailed among the Jews; and when the Christian converts were commanded under the Dioclesian persecution to surrender them, they stigmatized those who complied with the requisition as betrayers⁴.

Copies then must have multiplied by increasing veneration, and however trivial inaccuracies might proportionably prevail, concerted alteration must have become more impracticable. Thus every circumstance seems to have conspired to preserve the integrity of the Scriptures free from a suspicion of intended corruption, or of change in any essential point. The jealous

³ When the Hebrew text differs from the Greek, it is sometimes more unfavourable to the Jewish opinions, as in Psalm ii. 12. The passage in the 16th verse of the xxiid Psalm, which has been produced as a concerted alteration, is certainly, if really altered, only corrupted by accident, for the copies which differing from the Septuagint, instead of כָּרוּ, *caru*, "they pierced" my hands and feet, read כָּאֲרִי, *caari*, "as a lion" "they rended my hands and my feet," can hardly be conceived to have been intentionally changed to a stronger though figurative representation of the wounds inflicted at the crucifixion; nor is it probable that two verses should have been designedly omitted from chap. xv. of Joshua, merely because they describe likewise in the Septuagint, that Bethlehem was in the territory of Judah, a circumstance otherwise well known.

⁴ Traditores.

care with which they were preserved in the tabernacle, and in the temple, being not more calculated to secure their purity, than that reverence which afterwards displayed itself in the dispersed synagogues, and in the churches consecrated to the Christian faith; and hence we find in the Scriptures only such corruptions as might have been accidentally produced⁵. The most ancient Hebrew manuscripts which modern inquiry has ever been able to procure, do not usually seem to be above 600 or 700 years old, and none exceed the age of 900. In proportion to their antiquity, they are found to be more free from corruptions⁶, and for the reason before assigned, that these corruptions are but the natural effects of frequent transcription, the consequence of careless haste, or casual inadvertency. In important points, almost all correspond, or are easily reconciled with each other, though collected at different times, and in different places.

Not only, however, is the purity of the sacred volume established by the general coincidence of the Hebrew copies, but it is still farther proved, beyond a possibility of suspicion, by the agreement which subsists between the Hebrew and the Samaritan Pentateuch⁷, and by

⁵ See Morinus, Capellus, Grotius, and Kennicott's Bible. The precepts of Scripture are generally repeated in the different Books, so that errors in these must be immediately detected; the mistakes are chiefly in proper names, and numbers; in the latter often occasioned by the use of letters for numbers. See Irenæus, Beza, &c.

⁶ The best are those copied by the Jews of Spain: those by the Jews of Germany are less correct.

⁷ The Samaritans, whether the descendants of the ten tribes, who seceded under the reign of Rehoboam, or of the colony, said to have been brought from Cuthah, or other parts of Assyria, (2 Kings xvii. 24.) professed the Hebrew religion, and had a Temple, a Priest, and

the correspondence preserved in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament (as collected by Ezra), with the original Hebrew.

The Samaritan Pentateuch is a copy of the Hebrew original, and according to the most general, and best supported opinion, written in the old Hebrew or Phœnician characters^s. Though this Samaritan copy has some variations, transpositions, and additions, which render it different in some respects from the Hebrew manuscripts, yet these are never of such a nature as to impeach the integrity of the Scripture doctrine, or to lessen our confidence in the purity of the Hebrew

a Pentateuch. When that Pentateuch was copied, is uncertain; some say at the time of the first revolt; others contend that it was copied from Ezra's collection, as it contains some interpolations ascribed to him. As the Samaritans rejected the regulations established by Joshua, and also the authority of the Hebrew priesthood, they disregarded not only the Books which were written subsequently to the revolt of the ten tribes, and which were addressed more particularly to the kingdom of Judah, but likewise some that were written previously to the division of the two kingdoms, as the Books of Joshua, of Samuel, of David, and of Solomon. There is still a remnant of the Samaritans, who have their high priest, said to be of the race of Aaron, and who offer up their sacrifice upon Mount Gerizim to this day. The chief part of this sect reside at Sichem, which was afterwards called Flavia Neapolis, and now Naplousa. They have synagogues in other parts of Palestine, and are numerous in Syria and Egypt, and some of them are dispersed in the North of Europe, Vid. Joseph. Ant. lib. vii. cap. 3. p. 1299. Prid. Con. part i. book vi. Benjamin Tudela Itinerarium, p. 15. Lug. Bat. Gassen. in Vita Piereskii, vol. v. s. 1. p. 255; and Hottinger Promptuarium, sive Bibliotheca Orientalis et Catalogus omnium præceptorum legis Mosaicæ. Edit. Basil. Scalig. de Emend. Temp. Maundrell's Journey, page 80.

^s Scaliger, Vossius, Capellus, Univer. Hist. book i. ch. vii. Prid. Con. part i. book vi.

copies; for if we except some chronological variations, which are perhaps not utterly irreconcilable, and a designed alteration discovered in the Samaritan Pentateuch, which was manifestly inserted to support an opinion, that Mount Gerizim⁹ was the place which God had chosen for his temple, we shall find that the variations of this copy are not more than might reasonably be expected from frequent transcriptions during a period of 2000 years¹; for so long a time had elapsed from the apostacy of Manasseh², to the introduction of this copy into Europe.

This general agreement is the more remarkable, and

⁹ Deut. xxvii. 4. They have put Gerizim instead of Ebal into this verse.

¹ The fathers are supposed to have had a Greek translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch, but from the sixth to the seventeenth century, no mention is made of the Samaritan Pentateuch; Scaliger first lamented that no one had procured a copy of the original. In consequence of this hint, the learned Usher obtained two or three copies of it by means of Sir Thomas Davis, then at Aleppo; and not long after, Sancius Harley, a priest of the Oratory of Paris, brought home another, which he deposited in the library of his order at Paris, from which copy Morinus published it in the Paris Polyglot. Vid. Prid. Con. part i. book vi. The Samaritans have likewise a translation of this Pentateuch into the language vulgarly spoken among them, their language being now so corrupted by foreign innovations, as to be very different from the original Samaritan. This translation is published in the Paris and London Polyglots, and is so literal, that Morinus and Walton thought that one version would serve for both, only noting the variations. Vid. Prid. Con. part ii. lib. i.

² The son-in-law of Sanballat, who was compelled by Nehemiah to quit Jerusalem, and who carried away a copy of the law to Samaria. He is called Manasses by Josephus. Vid. Nehem. xiii. 28. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. cap. 8. p. 501; and lib. xii. cap. 4. p. 523.

exhibits the stronger evidence in support of the purity of the Hebrew text, since the Samaritan copy was preserved by those who from their first separation entertained the greatest hostility against the Jews, but who do not appear to have charged them with corrupting the sacred text.

This common correspondence affords, therefore, a striking proof of the general integrity of the different copies, and we shall be still farther convinced, that the sacred volume has preserved its genuine purity in every important point, if we consider how little the Septuagint version of the Scriptures differs from the Hebrew copies, notwithstanding the many ages that have elapsed since the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, who was the second monarch of the Macedonian race, about 280 years before Christ, and under whose reign this translation was made into Greek. It has been maintained, indeed, by some learned men, that only the Pentateuch was translated at first, and that the other books³ were rendered into Greek successively at different times; however this may have been, they were all translated long before the birth of Christ⁴. This ver-

³ Euseb. *Demonst. Evang.* lib. iii. cap. ult. *Hodius de Bibl. Text. Origin.* l. 2. c. 7—10. p. 159—200. Edit. Oxon. 1705.

⁴ The Septuagint was probably the first entire version of the Scriptures made into the Greek, though there are authorities which state that some part of them, particularly the law and the prophets, were translated into that language before the time of Alexander's expedition. *Vid. August. de Civit. Dei*, lib. xviii. cap. 42 and 43. *Huet. Demonstrat. Evang. Prop.* iv. cap. xii. sect. 3. p. 132. Edit. Paris, 1679. The account of the Septuagint translation, attributed to Aristæas, is loaded with so many fabulous circumstances, that it

sion has not many important variations from the Hebrew, except in some chronological accounts, occasioned probably by the carelessness of the copyists⁵. It was used in all those countries where Alexander had established the Grecian language, and seems to have been admitted into the Jewish synagogues in Judæa, and even at Jerusalem, where that language prevailed; and the Septuagint was certainly most used there in the time of our Saviour, for the citations in the New Testament from the Old, seem most frequently to have been made according to that version⁶.

has been thought entitled to but little credit. It is, however, repeated by Philo, Josephus, and other writers. Vid. Aristæas, Hist. 70 Interp. Philo in Vit. Mos. lib. ii. p. 139. Edit. Mangey, 1742. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. cap. 2. Irenæ. lib. iii. cap. 25. The truth seems to be, that a version was begun in the reign of Ptolemy, and perhaps finished at different times for the use of the Alexandrine Jews, but before the time that the Book of Ecclesiasticus was written, and consequently at least two centuries before Christ. Vid. Prolog. to Ecclus. Hodius de Bibl. Text. lib. ii. cap. viii—x. p. 123. 178. 217. Edit. Oxon. 1705. Comp. 2 Sam. xxii. with Psalm xviii. Other translations into Greek were afterwards made by Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus. Vid. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. cap. 22. p. 409. Edit. Potter, 1715. Euseb. Præp. Evang. c. vi. Prid. Con. part ii. book i. Irenæus, lib. iii. contra Hæres. cap. xxv. p. 254. Edit. Oxon. 1702.

⁵ In the vth and xth ch. of Genesis, every Patriarch is said to have lived 100 years longer, according to the Septuagint, than in the Hebrew, except Jared and Methusalem.

⁶ St. Jerom was of opinion, that the evangelical writers cited from the Septuagint when it did not differ from the Hebrew, but that they had recourse to the original, when there was any difference; but the instances which he has produced, do not prove that they referred to the Hebrew; and the Evangelists sometimes quote from the Septuagint when it differs from the Hebrew, as in Rom. x. 18,

At that period, then, it was considered an authentic copy of the inspired books, or it would not have received the sanction of our Saviour, and of his apostles; and though since that time it has been rejected by the Jews on account of the estimation in which it was holden by the Christians, yet was it for the two first centuries exclusively used, and has ever since been regarded with great veneration by the Christian church, as a very faithful, though not a literal version.

from Psalm xix. 4, and Romans xv. 12, from Isa. xi. 10, though our Lord himself seems to have cited from the Hebrew. In the time of Christ, the original and the translation probably agreed more exactly than they now do, as many corruptions must have been subsequent to that period: it is, therefore, in some instances uncertain whether the citations are made from the Hebrew or from the Septuagint, though they appear, indeed, to be made chiefly from the latter, excepting, perhaps, by St. Matthew, who, probably writing in Hebrew, might use the original. Vide Hieron. *adv. Ruffin.* and Mede's works. Dr. Brett imagines that our Saviour read out of a Targum when he read the lesson in the synagogue. Vide Luke iv. 18, comp. with Isai. lxi. 1, and that he cited a paraphrase on the cross: vide Matt. xxvii. 46, for Sabacthani is found only in the Chaldaic tongue, and in the Hebrew it is עֲבֹתָנִי, gnazabtani. Christ and the Apostles probably cited what was most known to the Jews, the sense being the same, whether from the Original, Version, or Paraphrase. The language spoken by the Jews in our Saviour's time, was the Hebrew mixed with the Chaldaic and Syriac, which dialects compose, likewise, the basis of the modern Hebrew. Greek, however, was generally understood. Hieron. *Catal. Scriptor. Ecclesiasticor.* vol. iv. p. 102. Edit. Paris, 1706. Randolph's *Prophecies*, and other Texts compared with the Hebrew and Septuagint. Brett's *Dissertation on the ancient Version of the Bible*. Blair's *Lectures*. Spearman's *Letters to a Friend concerning the Septuagint*: the learned author, after a careful investigation, main-

Thus does the general coincidence between the Hebrew copies, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, demonstrate the unaltered integrity of the Scriptures in important points, as we now possess them, and this integrity is still farther confirmed by the conformity which subsists between those various translations of the Bible into different languages, which have been executed since the time of our Saviour⁷. It appears, therefore, that from their first inspiration to the present day, the sacred writings have been dispersed into so many different hands, that no possible opportunity could be afforded for confederate corruptions, and every designed alteration must immediately have been detected.

The first Hebrew Bibles were published towards the conclusion of the fifteenth century, by the Jews of Italy⁸. Many were afterwards published at Venice,

tains, that out of 163 texts cited in the New Testament, there was a majority of 43 from the Septuagint.

⁷ The general integrity of the text is likewise confirmed by the evidence of the Chaldee paraphrases, which are called targums or versions; these were translations of the Old Testament from the Hebrew into Chaldee, for the benefit of those who had forgotten the Hebrew after the captivity; vid. Nehem. viii. 8. The two most ancient and authentic are that of Onkelos on the law, and that of Jonathan on the Prophets; these were probably made soon after the captivity, or at least before the time of Christ, but they are blended with more modern comments. The other targums are of much later date. The targums are printed in the second edition of the Hebrew Bible, published at Basil, by Buxtorf the Father, in 1610.

⁸ The Hebrew Bible, according to Houbigant, (Proleg. p. 94. 96,) was first printed by R. Jacob ben Chaim, but Kennicott says, that this was not published till 1528, and that, therefore, it was sub-

Antwerp, and Amsterdam, as well as in other places, which have their respective merits and defects; but perhaps, the most important edition, that, which does honour to our country, is the celebrated work of the late Dr. Kennicott, who, a few years since, published his Bible, containing the very accurate text of Vander Hooght, with the variations of near 700 different manuscripts, collected at a great expense, and collated with great labour and care⁹, together with the variations of numberless Samaritan manuscripts, compared with

sequent to that revised by Felix Pratensis, published at Venice, 1517. There is still extant in Eton Library a vellum copy of the Chetubim, or Hagiographa, printed, according to Dr. Pellet's account, at Naples, in 1487, and probably designed as a second or third part to the edition of the Prophets, printed according to Le Long, at Soncino, in 1486. See Le Long and Wolfius, *Bibliot. Heb.* ii. 397. This was followed by many others. See Kennicott's *Hist. of the Heb. Text*, 6th period. That of Vander Hooght, published at Amsterdam in 1705, and that of Houbigant, published in 1753, are the most distinguished and correct. The first Bible that ever was printed was a Latin Bible, published at Mentz, about A. D. 1450 or 1452. A copy of a second or third edition of this printed at Mentz in 1462, with metal types by John Faust, (whom some suppose to have been the first printer) and Peter Schoeffer, is in the king of France's library, and a first volume of this edition is in the Bodleian Library, together with a copy supposed to be of an earlier date; and another first volume was brought to England in the Pinelli collection, together with a last volume of one which had the appearance of being still more ancient; it had no date. There appear to have been two Bibles published before 1462, *vid.* Pinelli Catalogue. Michael Maittaire, *Ann. Typogr.* t. i. p. 272. Catalog. *Historico-Critic. Biblioth. Instruct.* vol. Theol. p. 32. *Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, vol. xiv. p. 238, edit. Paris, 1763, Amster. 1733.

⁹ The learned M. de Rossi has since published the variations of many more which he collated.

the Samaritan text, as published in the London Polyglot¹.

From the earliest ages of the primitive church translations have been made into various languages²; but it would be foreign from the design of this Introduction to enter into a particular account of the different versions that have been made, at different times, into other languages: we are concerned only with our English translation, of which it may be necessary to give some account, after we shall have taken a short view of the preceding versions, in the language of this country.

It is possible that the first inhabitants of Britain, who are said to have been converted to Christianity, had at least some of the Scriptures in their own tongue³; but the earliest translations, of which we have any account in our history, are those of the Saxon writers, who enabled their countrymen to read the Scriptures in their own language. It appears from writers contemporary with Aldelm or Althelm, that there was then extant a translation of the Scriptures, or of a part of them at least, in the vulgar tongue⁴;

¹ The word Polyglot is derived from *πολὺς* much, and *γλῶττα* a tongue; it means a Bible with the texts of several languages; there are Polyglots published in Spain, at Antwerp, at Paris, and London.

² Theod. ad Græc. Infid. serm. v. Euseb. Dem. Evan. lib. iii. c. ult. Usser. Hist. Dogm. de Script. et Sac. Vernac. cap. 8. p. 460. edit. Wharton, Lond. 1690, et Index.

³ M. Parker de Antiq. Ecc. Brit. Test. Ush. de Primord. Eccles. Britan.

⁴ The Saxon homilies exhort the people to read the Scriptures. Vid. also Aldelm. de Virginit. et Bede, lib. iii. cap. 5, ab an. 634.

and it is known that Aldelm, who was the first bishop of Sherborne, translated the Psalter into the Saxon tongue, about A. D. 706. Ingulphus⁵ speaks of a Psalter of St. Guthlack, who was a contemporary of Aldelm, and the first Saxon anchorite, and who influenced Ethelbald, king of Mercia, to found the monastery of Croyland; and this Psalter in the Saxon tongue, John Lambert, who was contemporary with Usher, professes to have seen⁶ among the records belonging to Croyland⁷. This was soon followed by the Latin and Saxon translations of the Psalter and Gospel, which indeed frequently appeared, especially upon any change in the language.

The Psalter and the Gospel, or as some say, all the books of the Bible⁸, were translated into Anglo-Saxon towards the beginning of the eighth century, by

⁵ Ingulf. cent. I. c. 83. *Bibliotheca veterum Patrum*, tom. viii. p. 1. Colon. Agrip. 1618.

⁶ Lambert in Respons. ad art. 26. epis.

⁷ There is also in the public library at Cambridge, a translation of the Psalms into Latin and English; and another old Latin translation with an interlineary Saxon version was in the Cotton Library, in the same character with the charter of King Ethelbald, which is dated A. D. 736. Vid. Usser. Hist. Dogmat. p. 103. Usher informs us, that Mr. Robert Bowyer was in possession of a Saxon translation of the Evangelists, by Ecbert, (who is called also Ekfrid, Eadfrid, and Eckfrid, bishop of Lindisfarne,) who died A. D. 721. Vid. Usser. Hist. Dogm. c. 5. Ecbert wrote also a copy of the Evangelists in Latin, to which Aldred, a priest, added a Saxon interlineary translation, which is in the Cotton Library. Vid. Wharton, *Anglia Sanc. pars i.* p. 695, edit. Lond. 1691. Fox, by the encouragement of Matthew Parker, published in 1571 a Saxon version of the Evangelists, made from the Vulgate, before it was revised by St. Jerom, of which the author is unknown.

⁸ Fox, and Caius de Ant. Cantab. lib. i.

the venerable Bede, who is related to have finished the last chapter of the Gospel as he expired¹.

The whole Bible was translated into Anglo-Saxon by order of king Alfred. He undertook the version of the Psalms himself, but did not live to complete it. Another Anglo-Saxon version appears to have been made soon after².

Several books of the Old Testament were translated into Anglo-Saxon by Elfred or Elfric, Abbot of Malmesbury, and afterwards, A. D. 995, Archbishop of Canterbury. The Pentateuch, Joshua, and Judges, of this translation were preserved in the Cotton Library, and published at Oxford in 1699, by Edmund Thwaites³.

One of the first attempts at a translation into the English language, as spoken after the Conquest, appears to have been made by Richard Rolle, an Hermit of Hampole in Yorkshire, who translated and wrote a glossary upon the Psalter, and a metrical paraphrase of the Book of Job. He died A. D. 1349.

A complete translation of the whole Bible, including the apocryphal books, was soon afterwards performed by John Wickliff⁴. It was a literal version, made

¹ Fox says, that he translated the gospel of St. John a second time, but Cuthbert, his scholar, tells us, that he finished at John vi. 9. Vid. Bayle.

² This was published with a Latin interlineary text, by John Spelman, in 1640. Dr. Brett supposes this to have been Alfred's Psalter. There is another interlineary Psalter in the library at Lambeth, apparently of a later period. Spelman published with his Psalter, the various readings of four manuscripts.

³ Le Long, Calmet, and Lewis's Hist. of Transl. of the Bible.

⁴ Huss. Replicat. con. T. Stokes Arund. Constit. Lynwood's Glossary, &c. The New Testament of Wickliff's version sold for

from the Latin, with the prologues of St. Jerom, to the books of the New Testament, and appeared between A.D. 1360 and 1380. The New Testament of this translation, which is still extant in many manuscripts, was published by Lewis in 1731. Some writers have conceived that an English translation was made before the time of Wickliff⁵, and there are copies at Oxford⁶, which Usher assigns to an earlier period; but it is probable that these may be genuine or corrected copies of Wickliff's translation. Lewis is of opinion that John Trevisa, who is by some related to have made an entire English version of the Scriptures about 1387, did in fact only paint a few sentences on the chapel walls of Berkeley Castle, and intersperse a few verses in his writings⁷, with some variations from the received translation. It is, however, highly probable, that others besides Wickliff un-

four marks and forty pence, as appears from the register of W. Alne-
wich, Bishop of Norwich, 1429, as quoted by Fox. Vid. James,
Corrupt. of Fathers, p. 277. Fox's preface to Saxon Gospels, A.D.
1571.

⁵ Dr. James was of this opinion; see Corrupt. of Fathers, p. 225. Bishop Bonner professes to have seen one translated above eighty years before that of Wickliff: so little, however, were the Scriptures used in the time of Wickliff, that some secular priests of Armagh, who were sent by Archbishop Fitzralph, (the translator of the Bible into Irish) to study divinity at Oxford, about A.D. 1357, were obliged to return, because they could no where find a Latin Bible. The clergy were then seldom able to read Latin. See Fox's Extracts from Longland's Register.

⁶ There is a copy of the Old Testament of this translation in the Bodleian Library, one at Queen's College, and one at Lambeth; and of the New Testament, one in the Bodleian, and two at Cambridge, in Sydney and Magdalen Colleges.

⁷ Lewis's Hist. of Translations.

dertook this important work, and translated at least some parts of the Scriptures. Hitherto translations were made only from the Italic version, or from that of St. Jerom.

Great objections were, however, made to these and all translations, as promoting a too general, and promiscuous use of the Scriptures, which was conceived to be productive of evil consequences, and Wickliff's Bible, particularly as it was judged to be an unfaithful translation, was condemned to be burnt. In the time of Richard the Second, a bill was brought into Parliament, A.D. 1390, to prohibit the use of English Bibles. The bill, however, being strongly reprobated and opposed by John Duke of Lancaster⁸ was rejected; but about A.D. 1408, Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, decreed in a convocation of the Clergy at Oxford, that no unauthorised person should translate any text of Scripture into English, or any other language, by way of books, and that no translation made either in, or since Wickliff's time, should be read, till approved by the bishop of the diocese, or in a provincial council. This decree was enforced by great persecutions, and as about the same time Pope Alexander the fifth condemned all translations into the vulgar tongue, they were, as much as it was possible, suppressed till the Reformation.

It appears indeed, from our bishops' registers, that in consequence of Arundel's commission, several per-

⁸ Usher, Parker, Linwood, and Collier. The duke is related to have said, "We will not be the dregs of all, seeing other nations have the law of God, which is the law of our faith, written in their own language." Vid. Fox's pref. to Saxon Gospel, A.D. 1571. Usser. de Script. et Sacr. Vern.

sons were burnt, on refusing to abjure their principles, for having read the New Testament, and the Ten Commandments, in Wickliff's translation⁹. In the reign of Henry VIII. whose violent passions were providentially rendered conducive to the reformation in this country, William Tyndal, or as he was otherwise called, Hickens¹, having left the kingdom on account of his religious principles, translated at Antwerp, by the assistance of John Fry, or Fryth, and William Roye, the New Testament from the Greek, and printed it in octavo, in 1526². The written copies of Wickliff's translation had been long known, but this was the first time that any part of the Scriptures was printed in English. It appeared at Ham-burgh, or Antwerp, and was dispersed at London and Oxford. Wolsey, and the bishops, published prohibitions, and injunctions against it as false, and heretical. Tonstal, Bishop of London, and Sir Thomas More, bought up almost the whole impression, and burnt it

⁹ At that time the people were so little acquainted with the Scriptures, and so ignorant even of the language in which they were originally written, that upon the appearance of printed editions of the Scriptures in the Hebrew and Greek originals, some of the more illiterate Monks declaimed from the pulpits, that "there was now a new language discovered, called Greek, of which people should beware, since it was that which produced all heresies; that in this language was come forth a book called the New Testament, which was now in every body's hands, and was full of thorns and briers. And there had also another language now started up, which they called Hebrew, and that they who learnt it were turned Hebrews." Vid. Hodius de Biblior. textu original. lib. iii. c. 13. p. 464, 5. edit. Oxon. 1705. Erasm. epist. lib. xxxi. No. 42. edit. 1642.

¹ Hist. et Antiq. Oxon. lib. ii. p. 375, vol. ii.

² Fox's Acts. Usser. de Script. p. 187. Joye's Apology. Seven

at St. Paul's Cross, which, whether or not intended to serve Tyndal³, did most certainly assist him in the continuance of his designs⁴. The venders of Tyndal's work were condemned by the star-chamber, to ride with their faces to the horses' tails, with papers on their heads, and with the books which they had dispersed tied about them, to the standard in Cheapside, and they themselves were compelled to throw them into the fire, and were afterwards amerced by a considerable fine⁵. The clergy now professed an intention of publishing the New Testament themselves, and a proclamation was issued against Tyndal's work; but before the appearance of this proclamation, Tyndal, by the help of Miles Coverdale, had translated the Pentateuch, which was printed at Hamburgh, in small octavo, in 1530⁶. In the same year he published a corrected translation of the New Testament; and in

editions of Tyndal's New Testament are said to have been printed in ten years, making 1500 books. Waterland, Letter 16. to Rev. Mr. Lewis. See Works, vol. x. p. 282—7, edit. Van. Mildert, 1823.

³ Jortin's life of Erasm. Collier's Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 22. Sir Thomas More's Engl. works, vol. ii. p. 369. The Dutch editions were soon published, and dispersed at a cheap rate, at about thirteence pence each. The English books were sold for about 3s. 6d. Three editions were sold before 1530. Thus were eyes opened to the abuses of popery.

⁴ Sir Thomas More objected to translations in general, and particularly considered Tyndal's as erroneous, especially in matters of church government. Vid. Spelman's papers. Burnet, vol. i. b. 2. p. 160.

⁵ Hall, Henry VIII., Fuller, &c.

⁶ Mr. Thoresby speaks of a copy printed at Marpurg, in Hesse, by Hans Luft, in 1530. Vid. Ducat. Leod. Lewis says that Tyndal translated this Pentateuch from the Hebrew. Vid. Hist. Transl. p. 70.

1531, a translation of Jonah. As he had but little knowledge of the Hebrew, he probably rendered chiefly from the Latin, though he had some reference to the Hebrew, and his work had great merit, considering the disadvantages under which he laboured ⁷. His prefaces, which reflected on the bishops and clergy, were chiefly complained of, though eagerly read by the people; and provoked Henry, at the instigation of his ministers, to procure that he should be seized in Flanders, where he was afterwards strangled, and his body burnt.

In 1535 Miles Coverdale published a translation of the whole Bible, which, as some have supposed, was printed at Zurich, chiefly from the original language. It was dedicated to the King, probably by permission, though Tyndal was now in prison for his work. Coverdale styled it a special translation, and it passed under his name; but it is supposed to have contained much of Tyndal's labours, though none of his prologues, or notes ⁸.

Hebrew was first publicly taught in England in 1524, by Robert Wakefield, under countenance of Henry VIII ⁹.

When the papal restrictions were no longer re-

⁷ The translation of the Pentateuch was finished in 1528; but Tyndal being shipwrecked in his voyage to Hamburgh, lost all his papers, and was obliged to begin his work again. He was strangled and burnt near Villefort Castle, about eighteen miles from Antwerp, praying that God would open the king of England's eyes. Vid. Fox's Martyrs. He received only 14s. Flemish for his work.

⁸ This was reprinted in large quarto in 1550, and again with a new title in 1553.

⁹ Hodius Biblior. text. original. lib. iii. c. 13. p. 465, edit. Oxon. 1705.

spected in this country, it was strenuously urged, that if Tyndal's translation were erroneous, a new one should be made; and Cranmer had sufficient interest in convocation, in 1535, to obtain, that a petition should be made to the king for that purpose. Henry, influenced partly by argument, and partly by the interest which Anne Boleyn had in his affections, commanded that it should be immediately taken in hand. Cranmer began with the New Testament, assigning a portion of the translation to be revised by each bishop. But the refusal of Stokesly, Bishop of London, to correct his portion, appears to have put a stop to the work at that time. In 1536 Cromwell directed in his injunctions to the clergy, "that every parson or proprietary of a church, should provide a Bible in Latin and English, to be laid in the choir for every one to read at his pleasure."

In 1537 was published a folio edition of the Bible, which was called Matthews's Bible, of Tyndal's and Rogers's translation; it was printed by Grafton and Whitchurch, at Hamburgh¹. Tyndal is said to have translated to the end of Chronicles, or, as some state, of Nehemiah, if not all the canonical books both of the Old and New Testament², and Rogers completed the rest, partly from Coverdale's translation. He had compared it with the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin Bibles, and separated the Apocryphal Books, inserting prefaces and notes from Luther. As the name of Tyndal, who had been burnt for an heretic, was now

¹ The 1500 copies cost 500*l.* then a large sum.

² It certainly contained his translation of Jonah. See More's Confutation of Tyndal's Answer, 1542: and others translated different parts.

become in some degree obnoxious, Rogers published it under the feigned name of Matthews. It was dedicated, and presented at Cranmer's request, by Cromwell, to the King, who gave his assent that it should be printed in English, and generally read; and notwithstanding the opposition of the clergy, the book was received by the public with great joy.

Another edition was afterwards prepared and collated with the original, by Miles Coverdale; and Grafton and Whitchurch obtained leave to publish it at Paris on account of the cheapness and superiority of the paper. But notwithstanding the French King's licence, the Inquisition in 1538 obliged the printers to fly as heretics, and very few copies of the impression could be rescued from the flames⁴.

The presses however, and other printing appurtenances, being afterwards procured and brought to London, the Bible was published there in 1538 or in 1539⁵ by the King's authority. This was called the Bible in the great or large volume. It was published in folio, and had a frontispiece before it, designed by Holbein; but neither Coverdale's, nor Cranmer's preface, nor Tyndal's notes; only an account of the succession of the Kings of Judah, and directions in what manner the Old Testament should be read⁶. In this edition those passages

⁴ A few that an officer of the Inquisition had sold as waste paper, were recovered. The impression consisted of 2500.

⁵ Strype's Life of Cranmer, p. 444.

⁶ This edition as well as Matthews's Bible, is divided into five tomes. The apocryphal books, which are contained in the fourth of these divisions, are improperly entitled Hagiographa, as some of them are called in a secondary sense, if the text be not corrupted by St. Jerom. Vid. Hieron. præf. in Job. Reinhold's Prælect. and James's Corrupt. of Fathers, par. ii. p. 22.

in the Latin, which were not to be found in the original, were printed in a small letter, as was also the controverted text in St. John's epistle. It was objected to by the Bishops as faulty; but as they admitted that it contained no heresies, the King said, "then in God's name let it go abroad among my people." The epistles, gospels, and psalms, of this translation, which were inserted in our Liturgy when compiled, and afterwards revised, in the reign of Edward the Sixth, were preserved in it till the restoration of Charles the Second, when the gospels and epistles were changed for those of King James's translation. The old psalter, however, was retained, and is still read as excellent, and familiar by long use. An order was soon afterwards issued out, that every church should be provided with one of these Bibles.

In 1539 a second or third edition of this was revised and published by Richard Taverner, which had many marginal notes of Matthews's Bible; and was followed by other editions. In 1540 appeared a very improved edition, corrected by Archbishop Cranmer. It was called Cranmer's Bible, or the Bible of the greater volume⁷. It was republished in 1541, and countenanced by authority, and a proclamation was issued, that every parish church which was yet unprovided, should procure it, under a penalty, if neglected, of 40s. per month. The Romish Bishops still continued their endeavours, in opposition to Cranmer, and attempted to corrupt the subsequent editions by a

⁷ It was published in folio: the price was fixed at 10s. unbound, and 12s. bound; six were placed in St. Paul's church by Bishop Bonner.

multiplication of Latin words⁸; and though Cranmer obtained an order that the Bible should be examined by both universities, it appears not to have been put in execution.

In 1542 an act of Parliament⁹ was obtained by the adversaries of translations, condemning Tyndal's Bible, forbidding annotations or preambles in Bibles or New Testaments in English, and the reading of the Bible in English in any churches, or by the lower orders. Cranmer procured an indulgence for the higher ranks to read them in private. The use of the Scriptures being very much abused, the interdiction was continued, and confirmed during Henry's reign.

In the short reign of Edward the Sixth, all persons were allowed the use of translations; and new editions of Taverner's and of Matthews's Bibles¹ were published, and the Bible of the larger volume was ordered to be procured for churches². Every ecclesiastical person under the degree of Bachelor of Divinity, was enjoined to provide a New Testament in Latin and

⁸ Matt. Parker *Antiq. Lewis*, p. 146.

⁹ An. 34, Henry VIII. chapter 1.

¹ One of Taverner's in 1549, and one of Matthews's in 1551. Eleven impressions of the whole English Bible, and six of the New Testament were published; some were also reprinted from Tyndal's, Coverdale's and Cranmer's editions. Vid. Fuller and Lewis.

² These were to be procured at the expense of the parish. Before, the impropiator defrayed half the charge of the books used in the church, or sometimes the parson. In times of popery, missals, breviaries, and manuals, being written, were very expensive, and were bought by the rector. When rectories were annexed to religious houses, they continued to be subject to the charge of the books. There were, however, many disputes upon this subject, and the rectors often compelled the vicars to pay for binding the books. Vid. Lewis's *Hist. Trans.* p. 176.

English, with the paraphrase of Erasmus ; and Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, was committed to the Fleet for refusing compliance with these measures, and persisting in his opinions, was at length deprived. It was ordered also, that the epistle and gospel should be read at high mass on Sundays and Holidays, and a chapter of the New Testament in the Morning, and of the Old at Evening song.

In Mary's reign, different principles prevailed ; all books which were considered as heretical, as those containing the Common Prayer, and suspected copies of the Bible, were condemned. The Gospellers, as they were then called, fled abroad, and a new translation of the scriptures into English by Coverdale, Goodman, and others, appeared at Geneva, of which the New Testament was published in 1557 ; but the remainder of the work did not come forth till 1560. It was said to be from the original languages, was distinguished by Calvinistical annotations, and holden in high estimation by the puritans ³.

³ Above thirty editions of this were published by the Queen's and King's printers, between 1560 and 1616, and others were printed at Edinburgh, Geneva, Amsterdam, &c. The new Testament of this is said to have been the first English edition of the Scriptures which was divided into verses. The Greek and Latin Bibles were not anciently divided into chapters or verses, at least not like those now used. Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the reigns of King John and of King Henry III. is said to have first contrived the division into chapters ; others ascribe the invention to Cardinal Hugo, a Dominican Monk, of the thirteenth century, who adopted also sub-divisions, distinguished by the seven first letters of the alphabet placed in the margin, as convenient for the use of the Concordance, which he first planned for the Vulgate. About 1445, Rabbi Mordecai Nathan, alias Rabbi Isaac Nathan, a

Elizabeth was indirectly requested at her coronation, to countenance the translation, the Bible being presented to her in her procession, which she accepted with great appearance of gratitude and veneration ; and the Bishops were soon afterwards directed to prepare a translation. New editions of the Geneva, and of the great Bible were published. An act of Parliament was likewise passed for a translation of the Bible into Welsh, which was printed in 1556.

In 1568, Archbishop Parker's very correct and improved translation, undertaken by the royal command, and revised by the Bishops, under the direction of the Archbishop, and called the Bishop's Bible, appeared in folio⁴, with a preface by Parker. It was executed by very learned men, and the initial letter of every translator subjoined to his portion. Towards the conclusion of Elizabeth's reign Ambrose Usher, brother of the primate of Armagh, rendered much of the Old Testament

western Jew, to facilitate the conduct of a controversy with the Christians, introduced this division of chapters into the Hebrew Bibles, and resumed also the ancient division into verses numerically distinguished by marginal letters at every fifth verse ; from him the Christians received, and improved the plan ; and Robert Stephens adopted the division into the New Testament, of which he published a Greek edition in 1551. Vide Præfat. Buxtorf. ad Concord. Bibl. Hebraic. Morin. Exercit. Bibl. lib. ii. exercit. 17. c. 3. p. 484, edit. Paris, 1660. Præf. ad Concord. Græc. N. Test. Fabrici. Biblioth. Græc. lib. iv. c. v. Prid. vol. i. book v.

⁴ It was printed in thick quarto, and afterwards frequently in folio and quarto in 1569. This Bible was used in the public service for near forty years ; but the Geneva Bible being more adapted to the prevailing opinions, was most read in private. See Le Long, p. 430, Lewis, &c.

into English, from the Hebrew; which was never published ⁵.

Objections, however, being raised against all these translations, as well as against others made in opposition to them, it was determined in the reign of King James the First, when the principles of the Reformation were thoroughly established, to have a new version, which should be as much as possible free from all the errors and defects of former translations. Accordingly, fifty-four learned and eminent men, conversant with the original, were appointed. Several of these, however, either died, or from diffidence declined the task. Every possible precaution was taken to prevent objection to the execution of the work. The remaining forty-seven were ranged into six divisions ⁶. They had recourse to the Hebrew. Each individual translated the portion assigned to the division, all of which translations were collated together, and when the several companies had determined on the construction of their part, it was submitted to the other divisions for general approbation. They had the benefit of consulting all preceding translations, but were directed to follow, as nearly as might be consistent with fidelity, the ordinary Bible which was distinguished by the appellation of the Bishops' Bible. The contributions and assistance of the learned were solicited and obtained from all parts, and different opinions were deliberately examined by the translators, without any regard to the complaints against their

⁵ Daniel, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Job, were translated by Hugh Broughton. The manuscript of this version is still in three tomes quarto, in the library of Trinity-college, Dublin.

⁶ Vid. Johnson's account. Fuller, Selden, and Collier.

tardiness in the execution of the work. The translators met at Oxford, and Cambridge, and Westminster⁷. They began the work in 1607, and finished it in about three years. The death of Mr. Edward Lively, who was well skilled in the original languages, somewhat retarded the publication. It came out, however, in 1611, with all the improvements that could be derived from united industry, and conjoined abilities. It was first published in folio, in black letter, but a quarto edition was published in 1612, in the Roman type. It has since been repeatedly published in both. The Romanists⁸ started many unreasonable objections against this translation; and the Presbyterians professed themselves dissatisfied. It was, however, allowed, even by Cromwell's committee, to be the best extant; and certainly it is a most wonderful and incomparable work,

⁷ Three copies were sent to London, and two persons from each company were selected to revise the whole work. It was afterwards revised by Bilson, Bishop of Winchester, and Dr. Miles Smith. These two persons prefixed the arguments to the several books, and Dr. Smith, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, wrote the preface now prefixed to the folio editions. Bishop Bancroft is supposed to have been the overseer under his Majesty, to whom it is said in the preface, that the Church was much bound. The marginal references, and the chronological index annexed, which are published chiefly in the quarto editions, were afterwards furnished by Bishop Lloyd.

⁸ The English Romanists, finding it impossible to prevent the introduction of translations, published the New Testament at Rheims, in 1582, from the Latin, in a manner as favourable to their opinions as possible, and afterwards in 1609, they published at Douay a translation of the Old Testament, from the Vulgate, with annotations. They have, therefore, a translation of the whole Bible, which, however, they are forbidden to read without a licence from their superiors. The French Romanists have no authorized translation into their language.

equally remarkable for the general fidelity of its construction, and the magnificent simplicity of its language.

That it is not a perfect work is readily admitted; preceding versions were, perhaps, in some instances more successful; and subsequent translations of individual books may, in particular parts, have been more faithful: the great advancement made in the original languages since the date of the authorised version, the improvement in critical learning, and the many discoveries in the general pursuits of knowledge, have much tended to illustrate the sacred writings, and enabled us to detect many errors and defects of translation that might now be corrected and removed: and, what is a still more important advantage, we are now in possession of many hundred manuscripts which the translators under King James had no opportunities of consulting⁹. We are likewise emancipated from superstitious prejudices concerning the universal purity of the Hebrew text, and from a slavish credulity with regard to the Masoretic points. Whenever, therefore, it shall be judged expedient by well-advised and considerate measures, to authorize a revisal of this translation, it will certainly be found capable of many, and great improvements¹. As such a work, deliberately planned, and judiciously executed, would unquestionably contribute much to the advancement of true

⁹ Our translation was made from manuscripts of three, and four hundred years old, since it agrees with those only. But more ancient manuscripts are more correct, and more consistent with the Samaritan Pentateuch, and ancient versions.

¹ Bishop Lloyd's edition of our translation is improved in some respects. Dr. Paris likewise revised it in 1745.

religion, many pious men have expressed their earnest wishes for its accomplishment ; and doubtless, at some favourable time, by the blessing of God, the prudent governors of our church will provide for its execution. It is a work not lightly to be taken in hand, and certainly no single person is competent to the task. It is to be presumed, at least, that when a new translation shall be countenanced by public authority, it will be undertaken with the same cautious and deliberate measures, that were observed under King James. It should be the production of collective industry, and general contribution ; and the prejudices and mistakes which must characterise the works of individuals, should be corrected by united enquiry, dispassionate examination, and fair criticism. They, who already consecrate their labours to the task of translating the whole, or any part of the scriptures, are entitled to public gratitude and encouragement ; their endeavours must at least contribute to illustrate the sacred pages, and tend to facilitate the great work of a national translation. Till, however, the execution of this work shall be judged expedient, every sincere and well-disposed admirer of the holy oracles may be satisfied with the present translation, which is indeed highly excellent : being in its doctrines incorrupt, and in its general construction, faithful to the original. The captious, chiefly, and such as seek for blemishes, are disposed to cavil at its minute imperfections ; which, however, in a work of such serious and interesting value, they may require correction, should not be invidiously detailed. The few passages, which, by being erroneously translated, have furnished occasion for unjust and licentious aspersions against the Sacred Volume, are so clearly and satis-

factorily explained, by judicious comments, that no one can be misled in his conceptions, who is desirous of obtaining instruction. To amend the rendering of these passages will be the object of all future translators, who will undoubtedly be desirous of adhering as much as possible to the present version, and of adopting, where they can, a construction, familiarized by long use, and endeared by habitual reverence; of which the style has long served as a standard of our language, and of which the peculiar harmony and excellence could never be improved by any change that refinement might substitute.

OF THE PENTATEUCH.

THE Pentateuch, under which title the five Books of Moses are usually distinguished, is a word of Greek original¹. It was, probably, first prefixed to the Septuagint version, and was designed to include Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; all of which were written by Moses, in his own hand, probably in the order in which they now stand in our translation, though not distributed by their author into books, but composed in one continued work, as they remain to this day among the Jews, with no other division but that of little, and great Parasches². It is

¹ From Πέντε five, and τεῦχος volume. It is called by the Jews, חומשי, a word synonymous with Pentateuch; also תורה, the Law, a word which, when used in a larger sense, is applied to the whole volume of the Scriptures.

² Parasches, from פרש, to separate. The division of the law into parasches, or sections, is, by some attributed to Moses; by others, with more probability, to Ezra; they amounted to fifty-four, that by reading one of those portions every Sabbath in the synagogue, the people might fulfil a fancied obligation to read the law once publicly every year; the intercalated years contained fifty-four Sabbaths, and in other years a reduction correspondent to the number of Sabbaths was easily made, by an occasional junction of two chapters. These greater portions were subdivided into several smaller parts, called

uncertain when they were divided into books, but probably the division was first adopted in the Septuagint version, as the titles prefixed are of Greek derivation; they were, however, distinguished as five books in the time of Josephus.

THAT the Pentateuch was written by Moses, we are authorized to affirm by the concurrent testimony of antiquity, and by the uniform report of uninterrupted tradition. He speaks of himself in many parts, as the appointed author of its contents³. It is mentioned as the work of Moses under the title of the Law, by almost all the sacred writers, and cited as indisputably his work⁴, and it was received as such by the Jews and Samaritans, by every sect of the Hebrew and of the Christian church.

These books, indeed, could not have been written subsequently to the time of Moses, for they are addressed to the Israelites as contemporaries, “being

pesukim, or verses, which were probably inserted by Ezra for the use of the Targumists, or Chaldee interpreters, who after the captivity read a Chaldaic version of the Scriptures, with the original, for the benefit of those who had forgotten the Hebrew tongue, reading verse for verse alternately. The same division was adopted in the prophetical books, when the reading of the law was forbidden by Antiochus Epiphanes, but in them three verses were read together. These divisions are by no means the same as those in our Bibles. The Jews read half of the section on the Monday, the remainder on the Thursday, and on the Sabbath the whole of the section, both evening and morning. Vid. Prid. sub an. 444.

³ Exod. xvii. 14. xxiv. 4—7. xxxiv. 27. Numb. xxxiii. 4. Deut. xxxi. 9. 19. 22. 24. Mark xii. 26. Abbadie, Vérité de la Relig. Chrétien. Joseph. cont. Apion, lib. i. § 8. Proœm. Ant. § 3. 11—35.

⁴ Joshua i. 7, 8. viii. 31—35. Judg. iii. 4. 2 Kings xiv. 6.

delivered to the Levites which bare the ark, and unto the elders of Israel⁵ ;” and they never afterwards could have been imposed as a genuine work upon his countrymen, whose religion and government were built upon them. They exhibit also those minute details which prove that they were written by one who witnessed the events described. But what is sufficient to establish, not only the authenticity of these five books, as the work of Moses, but also their claim to a divine origin, as dictated by the Spirit of God, is, that the words and laws of Moses are cited by the sacred writers, as the words and laws of God⁶, and that they were appealed to by our Saviour and his Apostles, on various occasions, as the genuine work of Moses ; as the production of an inspired person, or prophet⁷ ; and on a solemn occasion, Christ confirmed every jot and tittle of the Law, and bore testimony to the infallible accomplishment of its designs and promises⁸.

It may be observed also that the whole code of laws, many of which were adapted to future circumstances, and figurative of future institutions, could not have been composed by an uninspired teacher.

These books, as has been before observed, were immediately after their composition deposited in the tabernacle⁹, and thence transferred to the temple, 2 Chron. xxx. 16. xxiii. 18. Nehem. i. 7, 8, 9. and the Psalms and Prophets passim.

⁵ Deut. xxxi. 9.

⁶ Nehem. viii. 14. Jerem. vii. 23. Matt. xv. 4. Galat. iv. 30. Heb. viii. 5. xi. 23. James ii. 8.

⁷ John i. 45. Luke xxiv. 27. Gal. iv. 21. See also John v. 46, 47.

⁸ Matt. v. 17, 18. Luke xvi. 17. 31.

⁹ Deut. xxxi. 26. Somewhere on the outside of the ark. Vid. 1 Kings viii. 9. 2 Chron. v. 10.

where they were preserved with the most vigilant care, being appointed to be read every seventh year at public solemnities¹; every expression was deemed inspired by the articles of the Jewish creed. The Jews maintained that God had more care of the letters and syllables of the Law, than of the stars in heaven, and that upon each tittle of it, whole mountains of doctrine hung: hence every individual letter was numbered, and notice was taken how often it occurred². The Law was read every Sabbath day in the synagogues³, and again solemnly every seventh year. The prince was directed to copy it⁴, and the people were commanded to teach it to their children, and to wear it, “as signs on their hands, and frontlets between their eyes⁵.” In the corrupt and idolatrous reigns, indeed, of some of the kings of Judah, the sacred books appear to have been much neglected. In the time of Jehoshaphat it was judged necessary to carry about a book of the law, for the instruction of the people⁶, and many copies might have

¹ Deut. xxxi. 10, 11.

² The Jews reduced the whole Law to 613 precepts, according to the number of the letters of the Decalogue, intimating that the whole law was reductively contained therein.

³ Luke iv. 16. Acts xiii. 15. 27. xv. 21. xxvii. 23. 2 Cor. iii. 15. Hieron. cap. vi. Bava Bathra. Maimon. præf. in Chaz. Aben Ezra, in chap. xxv. 16. R. David Kimchi. Deut. xxxi. 10. 24. 26.

⁴ Deut. xvii. 18, 19. xxvii. 3. xxxi. 10, 11.

⁵ Exod. xiii. 9. Levit. x. 11. Deut. vi. 6—9. 21. xi. 18, 19. This was probably a figurative precept which the Jews superstitiously fulfilled in a literal sense, with phylacteries, inscribed bracelets, &c. Vid. Isaiah xlix. 16. Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. 9.

⁶ 2 Chron. xvii. 8, 9. This indeed might have been an ancient practice, only revived by Jehoshaphat, for the Hebrews had probably few, if any, established synagogues before the captivity, and this

perished under Manasseh : yet still a sufficient number was always preserved by God's providence. It is mentioned, indeed, in the book of Kings⁷, as a particular circumstance, that in the time of Josiah, the book of the Law was found by the high-priest Hilkiah ; but this by no means implies, that all other copies had been destroyed ; for whether by the Book of the Law there mentioned, be understood the original autograph of Moses, (which was probably intended⁸) or only an authentic public copy, which might have been taken by the priests from the side of the ark of the covenant, to preserve it from the sacrilegious violence of Manasseh, it cannot reasonably be supposed to have been the only book of the Law then extant, since every King was obliged to copy the Law on his accession to the throne, it being the very basis of every civil, as well as of every religious regulation ; and not to mention private copies, Josiah must certainly have before seen the book of the Law, or he would not have projected the reformation of his kingdom in the manner recorded in the book of Kings⁹. The surprise, therefore, that Hilkiah, and the grief that Josiah are related to have felt, were owing either to the extraordinary circumstance of finding the book in the time of cleansing the temple, and of their endeavours to effect a reformation ; or to a sudden conviction of the multiplicity and importance of those precepts, which as they must have been conscious, had been violated and neglected.

account only proves, that public copies were not generally dispersed through the cities of Judea. Vid. 2 Chron. xv. 3.

⁷ 2 Kings xxii. 8. 11.

⁸ 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14.

⁹ Hottinger. Hist. Eccles. N. T. sect. XVI. Pars 4. p. 137.

Whether or not Moses wrote out twelve copies, as is related by tradition¹; it is probable that each tribe was furnished with a book of the Law. The schools of the prophets likewise, the ten tribes of Israel, and the Levites, who were appointed to read the Law in all parts, must have been provided with books; and it is certain that authentic copies were preserved during the captivity², and publicly read after the return³. It may be added also, that as scribes of the Law were at this time an existing order⁴, there is no improbability in the accounts, which state, that Ezra and Nehemiah produced 300 copies for the congregation and synagogues, founded on the re-establishment of the Jewish church. The same reverence which henceforward occasioned a multiplication of the copies of the Law called forth also more numerous guardians to watch over its purity; and the increasing accuracy of the Masora, contributed still farther to secure its integrity.

The Jews believed that Moses was enlightened by a much higher and more excellent inspiration than any subsequent prophet⁵ and his superiority is expressly asserted in an eulogium on his character in the book of Deuteronomy, which may have been inserted by Ezra. In the New Testament he is always mentioned distinctly, and with peculiar respect⁶. He conversed with God “face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend⁷,” in

¹ Huet. *Demonst. Evang. Prop.* iv. cap. xiv. p. 145 and 260. Edit. Paris, 1679.

² Dan. ix. 11. 13. Tobit vi. 12. vii. 13.

³ Ezra iii. 2. vi. 18. Nehem. i. 8, 9.

⁴ Jerem. viii. 8. Ezra iv. 8.

⁵ Vid. Maimon. de Fund. Legis. Huet. *Prop.* iv. cap. 72.

⁶ Mark ix. 4. Luke xvi. 29. Acts vii. 35. Rev. xv. 3.

⁷ Exod. xxxiii. 11.

that privileged and familiar intercourse which St. Paul promises to the heirs of future salvation⁸. Some, indeed, have supposed that Moses did not literally contemplate God himself; for our Saviour says, that “no man hath seen God at any time⁹,” and we are told that “the Law was given by angels¹.” He beheld, however, as much as it was possible for man to behold, some apparent and distinct representation of the divine presence of the Father or the Son miraculously displayed, though veiled perhaps in a glorious cloud; it being impossible, as indeed Moses himself was informed, for man to contemplate the actual face, or untempered majesty of God². It must, therefore, be understood that God spake to him not in visions and dark speeches, but in clear and manifest revelations³. Moses was likewise privileged to address God at all times⁴, without the assistance of the high-priest, who consulted by means of the Urim and Thummim. From revelations communicated thus immediately from God, proceeded those striking prophecies which he delivered. And these prophecies, with many others which he recorded, as uttered by the Patriarchs, to whom God disclosed his will, were gradually fulfilled in successive events, or finally accomplished in the Messiah.

Moses was likewise eminently invested with the power of miracles, and performed many illustrious wonders in Egypt, and in the wilderness; for the truth of

⁸ 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Smith's Discourse on Prophecy, ch. ii. and xi.

⁹ John i. 18. v. 37.

¹ Acts vii. 38. 53. Heb. ii. 2. Gal. iii. 19.

² Exod. xxxiii. 20.

³ Numb. xii. 7, 8.

⁴ Numb. ix. 8. Exod. xxv. 22. xxix. 42. xxx. 36.

which he appealed to his countrymen, and grounded the authority of his government and laws upon them⁵. The Egyptian magicians, who were interested to defeat his measures, acknowledged that “the finger of God”⁶ was shown in his miracles, and the Israelites, who beheld his power, were so satisfied of the truth of his pretensions (themselves having witnessed the support which he received from God), that they adopted his laws, and incorporated them into the very frame of their government, so that their civil and religious polity was founded on the platform which he had drawn. These laws were not moulded in conformity to any exigences of experience, but appointed prospectively in the wilderness, with a view to future circumstances, and with fore-knowledge of the nature of a country of which the people were not then in possession, and with which Moses was not acquainted.

The people could not but be impressed with veneration for their legislator. They beheld his extraordinary qualities; his open and generous temper; his fortitude and meekness so admirably blended⁷; his piety and wisdom; his zeal for God’s service, and for the welfare of his people⁸, which led him to prefer “affliction to the

⁵ Numb. xvi. 28—35. Exod. xiv. 31. xix. 9.

⁶ Exod. viii. 19. Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. ix. cap. 10. See Bryant’s observations on the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians, p. 244—248.

⁷ Eccclus. xlv. 1—5.

⁸ Exod. xxxii. 32. By entreating to be “blotted out of God’s book,” Moses probably meant, that he would submit to death, and the loss of God’s promised blessings, if he could obtain a remission of the sins of the Israelites. Comp. with Numb. xi. 15. 29.

treasures of Egypt ⁹." They saw that in obedience to God's sentence, he continued to wander with them in a desert, where even sustenance could be obtained only by miracles, and that he exerted the same strenuous endeavours for the attainment of the promised land, after it had been revealed to him that he should not live to conduct the people to its possession ¹. They beheld, likewise, that disinterested liberality with which he distributed wealth and honours on other families, while he left his own to attend on the tabernacle in a subordinate character ², without any allotment of land, or provision, but what must have been deemed precarious, if he had not trusted in Divine support for the permanency of his institutions; appointing a stranger to succeed him in the government of the people, and directing them to look to the tribe of Judah for their future sovereigns, and a greater prophet than himself ³.

If our knowledge of the existence of these qualities be drawn from the accounts of Moses himself, it must be recollected that he addressed his contemporaries, who could, from their own experience, judge of his veracity, and that he appealed to them as to living witnesses of the facts which he recorded. The description of the miracles is so blended with, and constitutes so large a portion of the history; and the events which occurred, resulted indeed so evidently from the interposition of providence, that we cannot deny the proofs of a Divine agency, without disputing the

⁹ Heb. xi. 24—28. Exod. ii. 1—15. Joseph. Antiq. lib. iv. cap. 8.

¹ Numb. xxvii. 12, 13.

² Numb. xi. 29. xxvii. 15—17. xxxiv. 17. Deut. i. 38.

³ Gen. xlix. 10. Numb. xxvii. 16, 17. Deut. xviii. 15.

truth of facts which are incontrovertible. His wisdom and integrity are displayed likewise in the description of his actions, and not by artful encomiums on his own character, of which he seldom speaks, but to illustrate his conduct. If, indeed, he be sometimes provoked to assert his claim to that praise to which he was justly entitled ⁴, he confesses with equal candour, his own faults and misconduct ⁵. With the same ingenuous regard to truth, he also recorded the errors and sins of his own ancestors and relations ⁶, and of Aaron, who acted with him; and boldly censured the disobedience of the people whom he addressed. He uniformly represented them as a “stiff-necked and rebellious people,” reminding them of their base ingratitude to God, and fearlessly threatened them with further marks of the Divine vengeance ⁷. He delivered his laws without respect to persons; spoke in the peremptory tone of one commissioned by God, not as desirous to conciliate favour, but as confiding in the assistance of Him, whose minister he was, yet evidencing a tender solicitude for their repentance.

⁴ Numb. xii. 3.

⁵ Numb. xx. 1—12. xxvii. 12. 14. It has been a subject of some discussion to determine by what misconduct Moses and Aaron provoked the Divine displeasure. The text informs us that God charged them with unbelief, and with not having sanctified or given glory to God. In the tenth verse Moses says, “Hear now, ye rebels, shall *we* produce water?” Moses was commanded only to *speak* to the rock, and he *smote* it twice. Vide Psalm cvi. 32, 33. Exod. iv. 13. xxxii. 32. Numb. xi. 11. 15. 21. 23. xxvii. 14. Deut. iii. 25. 27. iv. 21, 22. xxxi. 14. xxxii. 51. Usher’s Body of Divinity, p. 8.

⁶ Gen. xxxiv. 13—30. xlix. 5—7. Exod. vi. 20. xxxii. 4. Numb. xii. 1, 2. 10. Capell. ad A. M. 2481.

⁷ Deut. ix. 4—24. xxxii. 20—25. 28; also Numb. xiv. 11, 12.

If the contemporaries of Moses, who were the spectators of the works, and qualities which he displayed, had incontestable evidence of the divine appointment of their legislator; succeeding generations had also sufficient proofs of the truth and authority of those writings, which he bequeathed for their instruction. They must have been convinced that the deliverance from Egypt, and the sustenance procured for so large a multitude, during the continuance in the wilderness, could have been obtained only by divine interposition. They must have been persuaded, that their forefathers could not have accepted the dispensation of Moses, but in the assurance of its being revealed from God; and they beheld permanent testimonies of his veracity and divine commission, in the perpetual observance of the many festivals⁸, laws, and rites⁹, of which he recorded the institution, as well as in the preservation of those standing vouchers of the truth of his history and pretensions, the ark and tabernacle¹, the Urim and Thummim; the attestation of the prophets; and lastly, in the accomplishment of his threats and promises, which they experienced in various vicissitudes. This confidence was confirmed also by the covenanted protection afforded during their attendance on God's service at their solemn feasts²; by the

⁸ As those of the feasts of the Passover, of Pentecost, of Tabernacles, of Sabbaths, &c.

⁹ As that of Circumcision.

¹ As also the Tables of Stone, the rod of Aaron, which blossomed in the night; the preserved manna, and the brazen serpent, kept till the time of Hezekiah. Vid. 2 Kings xviii. 4. Exod. xvi. 33, 34. Numb. xvii. 5—8. Heb. ix. 4.

² Exod. xxxiv. 23, 24.

superfluous abundance that preceded the sabbatical and the jubilee years³; by the miraculous effects of the waters of jealousy⁴; by the descent of the celestial fire which consumed the sacrifices⁵; and by many other particulars, which need not be enumerated, but which fully account for those firm convictions, and for that rooted attachment to the memory and writings of their great lawgiver, which they have entailed on their posterity⁶.

Moses was of the tribe of Levi, the son of Amram, and an immediate descendant of Abraham. He was born, according to Bishop Usher, about A. M. 2433⁷; and was distinguished for the attractive beauty of his form. He was miraculously preserved from destruction, and “educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians⁸.” He displayed early marks of superior qualities, and being selected by God for the deliverance and instruction of the Israelites, maturely examined the truth of the Divine appearance, and diffidently declined the commission⁹, being, as he said, “slow of speech¹,” and apprehensive that he was of too little estimation, to be appointed as the deliverer of the Israelites. But when encouraged by God, he accepted of the appointment; and with perseverance and fortitude which have never

³ Levit. xxv. 3—22.

⁴ Numb. v. 11—31.

⁵ 1 Kings xviii. 38. 2 Chron. vii. 1. 2 Macc. ii. 10.

⁶ Euseb. *Historia Ecclesiast.* lib. ix. cap. ix. p. 358-9.

⁷ *Annal. Vet. Test.* p. 18.

⁸ Acts vii. 20—22. Philo de Vit. Mos. lib. i. p. 606. Macrobius, *Saturn.* lib. ii. cap. 15.

⁹ Exod. iii.

¹ Exod. iv. 10.

been equalled, contended for, and by divine assistance effected, the deliverance of the Israelites from their severe bondage; and conducted them through difficulties miraculously subdued to the borders of the promised land. Even then he still lingered in the wilderness, in a manner which cannot be explained but upon the supposition that he was directed by God. He received from the Almighty a collection of precepts modified in conformity to the peculiar character of the Jews, such as no human wisdom could have framed. He communicated to them a code of revealed laws, and modelled their government upon a form adapted to the conquest and possession of the country, and calculated in every respect to answer those high purposes which it was intended to fulfil.

Having accomplished his ministry, and completed the Pentateuch, that work which unfolds, without any mysterious reserve, the wisdom of the first dispensation, and which opened a volume of sacred instruction to mankind; Moses "in the faith" relinquished the hope of entering into Canaan²; and in the expectation "of the recompense of a higher reward," resigned that life which had been devoted to God's service, in the 120th year of his age; to be succeeded by no equal prophet, till the arrival of the Messiah, of whom he was a signal type³; and who said of him to the Jews, that if they believed not his writings, how should they believe his

² Deut. i. 34—38.

³ Ezra, or the prophet who annexed to the Pentateuch the account of Moses's death, observes, that "no prophet had since arisen like unto Moses;" meaning, perhaps, that the great prophet, the Messiah, whom Moses promised, was not yet arrived. Deut. xviii. 18, 19. xxxiv. 10.

(Christ's) words ⁴, Moses having in many various circumstances of his character and eventful life, obviously prefigured the spiritual Redeemer of mankind ⁵.

The sepulchre of Moses, though said to have been "in the valley of Moab ⁶," seems to have been miraculously concealed, in order to prevent any idolatrous veneration of it; his character, however, was remembered by his people, with a reverence that approached to superstition. By the Greeks and Romans also, and other Heathen nations, he was not only quoted and acknowledged as the most ancient lawgiver ⁷, and as an historian of unimpeached veracity ⁸; but, by an apotheosis under which the venerable characters of antiquity were usually revered, he was translated

⁴ John v. 47. Luke xvi. 31.

⁵ Euseb. *Demon. Evang.* lib. iii. cap. 2. Jortin's *Remarks on Eccles. Hist.* vol. i. p. 196—226. Heb. iii. 2.

⁶ Deut. xxxiv. 6. Some Maronite shepherds were said to have found the tomb of Moses in Mount Nebo, A.D. 1565; but this is an idle fiction. Vide Basnage's *Hist. of Jews*, lib. iv. c. 18. and Patrick in Deut. iv. 6. St. Jude, in his epistle, speaks of a dispute between Michael and the Devil, concerning the body of Moses, alluding probably to a tradition received among the Jews, as possibly does St. Paul, when he mentions the names of Jannes and Jambres, who withstood Moses, and relates, that Moses said "he exceedingly feared and quaked" on the Mount Sinai; since these particulars are not recorded in the Old Testament. Jude 9. 2 Tim. iii. 8. Heb. xii. 21. Rabboth, or the great Commentaries. An account of the dispute concerning the body of Moses, was formerly in an apocryphal book, entitled *Περὶ ἀναλήψεως Μωσέως*, vide Origen. *Περὶ ἀρχῶν*, lib. iii. cap. 2.

⁷ Justin Martyr, *Apologia* I. p. 50. 67. 80. 86. Edit. Thirlb. Diodor. Sic. lib. i. p. 84, and *Fragm. Eclog.* 40. p. 543. edit. Wetsten. Strabo's *Geogr.* lib. xvi. p. 1103. Tacit. *Hist.* lib. v. Just. lib. xxxvi. cap. 2. Joseph. *Antiq.* lib. i. cap. 1. § 3.

⁸ To this even Porphyry bore testimony.

among the gods, and worshipped under different names⁹; for it is easy to trace the features of the Hebrew legislator, veiled under the personage of many a pagan deity, and to discern his qualities and actions under the borrowed attributes and conduct which idolatry ascribed to the objects of its veneration. So also were the customs, laws, and ceremonies of many nations, evidently derived from the Mosaic institutions¹. Every one, however slightly conversant with the polity and religion of pagan antiquity, will discover in the Pentateuch, the sources from whence they were often drawn. In the heroes and benefactors consecrated by Heathen admiration, are described the Patriarchs and illustrious persons of Scripture. In the fictions of pagan mythology, we behold the disfigured relations of sacred history; and the proud discoveries of philosophy are often but the imperfect transcript of revealed wisdom². In short, the historians, the poets, and the philosophers of antiquity have enriched their several works with distorted accounts of circumstances reported in the Sacred Volume. The pages of successive writers are pregnant with its relations, and the names of numberless authors might be produced, whose works either confirm the truth of the Pentateuch, or bear testimony

⁹ Artaban. in Eusebii Præp. Evang. lib. 1. c. 27. Vossius. Bochart. Huet. Demonst. Evang. prop. iv. cap. 8, 9.

¹ Justin, cap. 39. Waterland's Charge to the Clergy of Middlesex, May 19, 1731.

² Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. cap. 6. 12. 14, 15. lib. xiii. cap. 12. Cyril. cont. Jul. lib. i. p. 8. edit. Spanheim. Lips. 1696. Tatian cont. Græc. p. 181. in Bibliotheca Patrum, tom. ii. edit. Coloniae Agrippinæ, 1618. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. § 22. p. 1345. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i.

to the character and pretensions of its author³. But this has been so often done, that it must be unnecessary to dwell on the subject here.

In a general consideration of the character of that dispensation which is unfolded in the following books, there are some remarks which should be stated for its illustration. In the first place it should be observed, that we are authorized by the sacred writers to esteem it in some respects imperfect, as a particular and temporary covenant to endure only for a season⁴; imperfect, in condescension to the undisciplined stubbornness of the Israelites⁵, and imperfect, as elementary and

³ If there were no translation of the Scriptures into Greek before that of the Septuagint, yet the Heathen writers might have derived much sacred intelligence from colloquial intercourse, and Plato indeed professes to have so collected Phœnician and Syrian, that is Hebrew accounts. Vid. Plato in *Cratyl.* Nations appear to have been at first distinguished for civil and religious knowledge, in proportion to their proximity to, and communication with those countries where the light of revelation shone. The dispersion of the Jews into foreign countries afterwards opened channels of information to the Heathen nations, and some of this people were certainly scattered into Greece about the time when much of the Greek mythology was composed. Vid. Joel iii. 6. Bochart's *Phaleg.* lib. iv. cap. 24. Grotius de *Verit.* lib. iii. cap. 16. Huet. *prop.* xiv. cap. 2. Bryant's *Mythol.* Præf. to Shuckford's *Connect.* Edwards's *Discour.* vol. i. Hartley's *Discourse on the Truth of the Christian Religion*, in Watson's *Tracts*, vol. ii.

⁴ Jerem. iii. 16. xxxi. 31, 32. Heb. vii. 18, 19. viii. 7—13. ix. 10.

⁵ Exod. xxxiii. 23. Deut. xxxii. 28. Ezek. xx. 25. Matt. xix. 8. Acts xv. 10. Gal. v. i. 1 Tim. i. 9, 10. It is a great mistake, however, to suppose that any ritual precepts were ordained by the Mosaic law, in accommodation to customs which prevailed in Egypt, since its design was to segregate the Israelites from all other nations, and to wean them from all tendencies to idolatry, and since it inculcated a particular abhorrence of Egyptian practices. Levit.

figurative only of a spiritual covenant ⁶. As a code of laws designed for the civil government of the Israelites it was contrived with a view to the regulation of the external conduct. It was framed rather with intention to control the lawless and disobedient, than to effect an inward and perfect purity of heart.

It is to be observed, also, that as the law could not justify mankind from the guilt of original sin, but prescribed solemn expiations and atonements ⁷, and as an obedience to carnal ordinances could not be perfect or satisfactory, the Mosaic dispensation did not stipulate for those rewards which are offered through Christ ⁸, though it held out intimations of immortality, and prepared mankind for the gracious promises which were to be made by the gospel. As a covenant of works, it required undeviating obedience under the heaviest denunciations of wrath ⁹, inflicted severe penalties for acts of irreverence to God ¹, and made no allowance for unintentional offences; not calculated like the gospel, to proffer gracious terms of reconciliation and favour, but to point out the condition of man obnoxious to God's wrath ², and the insufficiency of his endeavours to propitiate forgiveness, and to atone for sin ³.

xviii. 3. Circumcision was certainly a divine appointment first observed as a religious rite by Abraham. Gen. xvii. 11.

⁶ Heb. vii. 18, 19. Gal. iv. 3—9.

⁷ Exod. xxx. 10—15. Levit. xvi. 34.

⁸ Rom. iii. 20. viii. 3. Gal. ii. 16. iii. 21. Heb. viii. 6. ix. 14, 15.

⁹ Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10.

¹ Exod. xxxi. 14. Levit. xx. 1—5. xxiii. 29, 30. Numb. xix. 13.

² 1 John i. 7. Rom. iv. 15. viii. 2. 2 Cor. iii. 6—9. Col. ii. 14.

³ Rom. iii. 19, 20. vii. 5—11. Gal. iii. 22.

It is likewise obvious to remark, that Moses, though appointed to communicate a divine law, must, with respect to the Israelites, be contemplated as a human legislator. He addresses them, indeed, as a state subject to a theocracy; but God had deigned to be considered in the light of a temporary king to his chosen people⁴; Moses, therefore, speaking as the legislator of a civil government, and delivering his laws to the people considered in their collective national character, enforces them chiefly by temporal sanctions; on motives of present reward and present punishment; thus annexing civil benefits to the observance, and civil penalties to the breach of political laws, as respectively their proper and proportioned consequences⁵. To the dull apprehensions, likewise, and sensual minds of the Israelites, promises and threats of speedy accomplishment were necessary, and best calculated to control them, in subserviency to those laws, of which the violation was immediately hostile to the declared intention of God, in the constitution of the Hebrew

⁴ Exod. xix. 6. 1 Sam. xii. 12. 17. 19. Isaiah xxxiii. 22. Hagg. ii. 4, 5. Warburt. Div. Legat. lib. v. § 3.

⁵ Moses had no occasion to reveal in precise terms the immortality of the soul, which the Israelites as well as all other people believed, and which had been implied in God's promises to the patriarchs. La Bléterie, in a note to the Cæsars of Julian, well observes, that "No nation is or was persuaded that all ends with death. No nation has received from its lawgivers the belief of another life; the lawgivers have every where found it.—The persuasion of the immortality of the soul, as well as that of the existence of God, is the tenet of mankind, and the faith of nature."—Duncombe's Select Works of Julian, vol. 1. p. 196-7. Porter's Evid. of Fundamental Truths.

polity. Moses also, resting on the miraculous proofs of a divine origin which accompanied the promulgation of the law, and confident of the Divine support in its establishment, was not under any necessity of recommending its acceptance by a direct appeal to those high and important inducements which might have been derived from the consideration of a future life and judgment. As the minister, however, of a divine revelation, as a teacher of religion, (in which light also Moses must be contemplated,) he undoubtedly intimated higher encouragements than those of temporal reward, and endeavoured to animate his people by the display of a more glorious prospect. He did not absolutely propose an eternal recompence to the righteous, as this was to be imparted on the ground of faith in the atonement, but he held out the expectation of immortality to those who relied on God's promises.

Hence it is that Moses so particularly describes the attributes and designs of God ⁶; so strongly insists on the advantage of obedience, and occasionally adverts to that final retribution, which should take place after death⁷. It was, however, not so much by the positive declarations, as by the figurative promises of the law, that Moses held out the consideration of eternal recompence to his people; for it was consistent with the typical character of the first dispensation, which was significant in all its parts, to shadow out, rather than directly reveal those spiritual rewards, which were to

⁶ Exod. iii. 6. comp. with Luke xx. 37. Gen. i. 27. ii. 7. iii. 15. 22. xxii. Numb. xxiv. 17. Deut. xxxii. 29. Heb. xi. 19.

⁷ Deut. viii. 16. xxxii. 29. where **אַחֲרֵיתָם** should be translated their last, or final state. Numb. xxiii. 10. Deut. xxxii. 29.

be annexed as more exalted sanctions to a higher covenant⁸; and it is evident that the promises of the Mosaic law were the figures and representations of “better things to come⁹,” as also that its threats were indicative of stronger denunciations, not only from their correspondent and allusive character¹, but also from the interpretations of the prophets; and it is certain that if the sensual and duller ranks were unable to discover the full extent of the promises, yet the more instructed and more enlightened persons understood and confided in their spiritual import². Still, however, it must be repeated, Moses does not ground his laws on spiritual sanctions, but rather has recourse to the strongest and most affecting motives of present consideration, urging God’s threat “of visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children³.” The dispensation

⁸ Heb. viii. 6. Though the law was designed rather to convince mankind of sin, by the severity of its requisitions, than to impart any distinct assurance of immortality; yet, nevertheless, salvation was unquestionably to be obtained in virtue of Christ’s atonement, by those who lived under the terms of the old covenant. Luke x. 25. 28. xxv. 42, 43. Rom. iii. 19, 20. Gal. iii. 22.

⁹ Ps. cxxxiii. 3. Deut. xxx. 15—19. comp. with Luke x. 25—28.

¹ Hieron. Epist. 50. ad Paulin. tom. iv. p. 570.

² Heb. xi. 8—16. The Mosaic covenant included that made to Abraham, which was a figurative counterpart of the gospel covenant, and of which the promises were certainly spiritual, and in the renewal of this covenant, together with that made at Sinai, Moses blends temporal and spiritual promises. Vid. Gen. xvii. 7. Deut. xxix. 13. xxx. Gal. iii. 8. 17. Jude 14, 15. Acts xxiv. 14, 15, &c. Tacitus states, that the Jews believed in the immortality of the soul. See Hist. l. 5. § 5. p. 549. Edit. Amstel. 1685. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. 2. § 30. p. 1383. Edit. Hudson.

³ Exod. xx. 5. Deut. v. 9. Josh. xxiv. 19. This denunciation

was designed to illustrate the moral government of God, under a peculiar administration in this world, while the Gospel was intended to reveal the principles on which the Divine Being will regulate his judgments in a future state.

It remains to be remarked, with respect to the laws delivered to the people of Israel, that some were of a confined and temporary, others of a general and permanent nature ; some being calculated to preserve the people from idolatry, and others to keep up a holy reverence for God. They are usually distinguished into ceremonial, judicial, and moral.

The ceremonial and the judicial laws are in the books of the Pentateuch joined together, as the Hebrew religion and polity were built up together in one fabrick. These laws as adapted to the particular state and government of the Israelites⁴, and often incapable of general application⁵, are collectively represented as not obligatory on other nations. Many of the laws are indeed pronounced by Moses, to be “ laws and ordinances for ever,” “ through all generations⁶,” and

against idolatry applied to punishments only in the present life, for God afterwards declared, that as to future retribution, “ the son should not bear the iniquity of the father.” Ezek. xviii. 20.

⁴ Circumcision, as a rite of distinction, was useless when the barriers between the Jew and Gentile were thrown down ; its figurative intention to promote purity of heart was preserved in the gospel precepts, and its actual practice in hot countries, as a salutary observance, was not forbidden, or discouraged, but as it implied a subserviency to the ritual law.

⁵ The number of the priests and Levites was limited. All nations could not be served by the Aaronical priesthood, neither could they resort three times a year to one place.

⁶ Exod. xii. 14—17. xxxi. 16. xl. 15. Levit. iii. 17. vi. 18. vii.

hence the Jews believe, that they never shall be abolished⁷, but it seems evident, that these expressions must be understood to mean only, that such laws should not be liable to abrogation by any human authority, and that they should continue till they had fulfilled their object; but by no means that they should never be repealed by the authority, on which they were first established⁸.

The ceremonial laws were unquestionably transient institutions, designed to intimate and foreshow evangelical appointments. As, therefore, in their nature, figurative of future particulars, they have passed away on the accomplishment of those things, of which they were the shadows⁹. Ritual observances are now unprofitable as spiritual righteousness is introduced¹, and the Levitical priesthood being changed, its appendant laws are changed also². The end of the ceremonial laws is fulfilled, and they remain only as the symbols of a well-concerted scheme; the prophetic testimonies that support a more spiritual covenant.

The judicial laws, also, as far as they respected the Israelites as a civil society, and were contrived with

36. x. 9. xxiii. 14—21—31—41. xxiv. 3. Numb. xv. 15. xix. 10.

⁷ Vid. Maimonides *More Nevoch.* par. ii. cap. 39. p. 301. Edit. Buxtorf. Basil. 1629.

⁸ The ceremonial laws were sometimes dispensed with, as was circumcision in the wilderness, where it was of but little use, as a rite of distinction. So David eat of the shew-bread, and our Saviour justified his conduct. Vid. 1 Sam. xxi. 6. Matt. xii. 3, 4.

⁹ Coloss. ii. 17.

¹ Rom. vii. 6. Heb. vii. 18, 19. 1 Pet. ii. 5. Barnab. Epist. sect. 9. p. 26. Pat. Apost. Cotelarii. Edit. Amstel. 1724.

² Heb. vii. 12.

regard to the peculiar and appropriate condition of that people; in as much as they were suited to the exigence of a time, and devised with a view to the accomplishment of certain purposes now effected, are no longer binding as positive laws on us.

Christ did not indeed formally, and in express terms, repeal any part of the Mosaic law; but whatever was accomplished, did necessarily expire. The Apostles, it is true, though they regarded the ceremonial law as a bondage from which they were freed³, still continued to observe some of its precepts. This, however, was by no means as a necessary service, but in compliance with the prejudices of the proselyte Jews⁴. As the force of education and long habit could not be immediately counteracted, the Jews were suffered to continue in the observance of those ritual precepts, which, if obsolete, were at least harmless, while they were not set up in opposition to the pretensions of the gospel covenant.

The Apostles, likewise, living under a government which was founded on the Mosaic establishment, and which had the judicial laws incorporated into the very frame of its constitution, could not, without violating the duties of good citizens, and without offending

³ Acts xxi. 21—27. 1 Cor. ix. 20. Gal. iv. 1—5.

⁴ Acts xvi. 3. St. Paul circumcised Timotheus, “because of the Jews which were in those quarters.” In a council previously held, the Apostles deliberated, indeed, concerning the necessity of circumcision; but they certainly understood, that with respect to the Gentiles at least, there could be no obligation to observe the law, as far as it was of a temporary and local nature. They appear to have assembled only to ratify by an unanimous decision, the sentiments of Paul and Barnabas. Vid. Acts xv. 1—29.

against the authority of the civil magistrate, refuse to be subservient to the regulations of that polity; they must have perceived, however, after they were enlightened by the descent of the Holy Spirit, that as far as the civil were interwoven with the religious institutions, they should give way to evangelical appointments. They must have understood, that as the distinctions between Jew and Gentile were to cease, the whole of that economy which was contrived to keep the Israelites a separate people, was useless, and inconsistent with the design of Christianity. Yet they knew that it was only by the gradual operation of the Christian spirit, that the Jews could be weaned from a long established obedience of the law, and that in fact till the constitution of their country should be changed or dissolved, such obedience was in some degree necessary. The Apostles, therefore, only then reprobated the advocates for the observance of the Mosaic law, when those advocates sought to enforce it as generally necessary, and as a means of justification⁴: they taught that salvation was to be obtained without the law⁵, and expressly exempted the Gentile converts from the necessity of respecting any precepts but those which were entirely moral, or partook of a moral character⁶.

⁴ Augustin. cont. Faustum, lib. xix. cap. 17. Opera, tom. 8. p. 218, 219. edit. Antwerp, 1700. Just. Martyr, Dialog. pars i. c. 264. edit. Thirl. Constit. Apostol. lib. vi. cap. 11, 12—20, 21, 22. Rom. x. 5.

⁵ Acts xiii. 39. Rom. iii. 28. ix. 32. Gal. ii. 16.

⁶ Acts xv. 10, 11. This declaration was first made in favour of the Gentile nations, (vid. Acts xv. 19.) who had neither prejudices nor civil regulations to control them; but the Gospel liberty was to extend equally to the Jews, when they should be released from the

As to the moral laws contained in the Decalogue, or occasionally interspersed through the judicial and ceremonial code, it is evident that these, as having in themselves an intrinsic excellence and universal propriety, and as founded on the relations which eternally subsist, as well with reference to our dependence on God, as between man and man reciprocally, must remain in perpetual force: for the Mosaic law was annihilated, only so far as it was of a figurative and temporary character.

The Ten Commandments which were first given, as containing the primary principles of all law, were doubtless introduced with so much majesty and solemnity, that they might retain an everlasting and irreversible authority, which no time should alter, no change of circumstance annul or invalidate. They were uttered by the voice of God, before the whole multitude of Israel; were written twice by God's own finger⁷; and are obviously distinguished from the other laws which were given to Moses only, which were written by him, and which were moulded in conformity to the peculiar condition and circumstances of the Israelites. Moses, likewise, (as has been observed by Hooker⁸;) evidently discriminates the moral from the ceremonial laws, for

influence of habit, and the injunctions of civil authority. Rom. vii. 4. viii. 15. Indeed, after the destruction of Jerusalem, most of the Hebrew converts to Christianity renounced the Mosaic law without hesitation: a part only adhered to it, as the Nazarenes, Ebionites, &c. Vide Mosheim. de Rebus Christ. Ant. Constant. sec. 2. § 38. note *.

⁷ Exod. xxxi. 18. That is, by God's immediate power, and not by the act of man. Vid. Maimon. More Nevoc. par. i. cap. 66. p. 119. edit. Buxtorf.

⁸ Hooker's Eccles. Polit. book iii. p. 146-7. edit. 1705.

in his recapitulation of the law, in the book of Deuteronomy, he says, "the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire, ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude, only a voice, and he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, the ten Commandments; and wrote them on two tables of stone," (durable monuments to intimate their unperishable authority); "and the Lord commanded me at the same time to teach you the statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it⁹." These commandments, then, given for the advantage of all mankind, founded on principles of invariable and universal propriety, communicated, it should seem, in some instances before the promulgation of the Mosaic law¹, and stamped with the two great characters of Christian excellence, gratitude to God, and love to man, are properly inscribed on everlasting tablets, in the Christian church, and must be observed as long as any reverence for the Deity shall exist.

The other moral laws, which are intermixed with the ceremonial and judicial precepts, and which have entirely a general character², may be considered as

⁹ Deut. iv. 10—14. v.

¹ The morality of the fourth Commandment, its primæval institution, and its perpetual force, (though with a change as to the day) have been considered as unquestionable as the authority of any other part of the Decalogue.

² Of these there are many. Vid. Exod. xxi. 19, 20. 22. xxii. 1. 4, 5, 6. 10, 11—16. 19, 20—22. 26—28. xxiii. 1—9. 12. Levit. xvii. 7. xix. 9, 10. 14. 17, 18. 29. 35, 36. xx. 9, 10. 17. xxiii. 22. xxiv. 18. Numb. xxx. 2. Deut. i. 16, 17. xi. 1. xiv. 29. xv. 7, 8. 11. xvii. 6. xxii. 1—3. 14—21. xxv. 14, 15. It may be deemed superfluous to contend for these, since the same principles are inculcated in the Decalogue, but every injunction

corollaries from, or commentaries on, the Decalogue. These, though blended with others of a local and temporary nature, and scattered through a collection superseded, and virtually repealed, have, as revelations of the Divine will, (which is ever uniform in the same circumstances,) as well as from their intrinsic character, a claim to perpetual observance, as much as those of the Decalogue. They were delivered, it is true, with less awful circumstances than were the ten Commandments, which summed up in a compendious form the whole excellence of the moral law; but the other laws had not the less authority, because imparted by the mediation of Moses, at the particular request of the people, who trembled at the voice of God³; and no argument against the perpetuity of these secondary laws can be drawn from the direction added, (chiefly for the sake of those that were of a local and temporary nature) to observe them in the land of Judea; since those of the two tables, though indisputably of universal obligation, were delivered with a similar application, as appears from the sanction annexed to the fifth Commandment⁴.

which illustrates the moral duties, and dilates moral precepts, is important. The law and the prophets are not useless, though we possess the "two Commandments on which they hang;" nor is the Decalogue superfluous, notwithstanding the Gospel hath furnished a more perfect rule, and declared, that all the law is fulfilled in one word. Matt. xxii. 40. Gal. v. 14. Besides, the dignity of the Mosaic law is affected by these considerations.

³ Exod. xx. 19.

⁴ This annexed motive of temporal reward, as well as the exordium prefixed to the first Commandment, and the commemoration added to the fourth, in Deut. v. 15, had an appropriate application when addressed to the Jews, which, however, by no means affected

No part of the law, as far as it is strictly moral, is abrogated by the gospel, any more than are the commandments of the Decalogue. The old dispensation is declared invalid only as a covenant of salvation, and it is superseded in Christ, only as far as it is accomplished. Jesus came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law ⁵, and its moral design is still unaccomplished, and must so continue till the end of time, for "till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled ⁶." Our Saviour added, still speaking of the law under one general consideration, "whosoever shall break one of these least Commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven;" and he elsewhere connected the promise of life with the observance of the moral law ⁷. The apostles were so far from considering as abolished any part of the Mosaic law, which had a moral character, that they expressly ratified and enjoined as necessary, injunctions which were not contained in the Decalogue, but which had only a moral tendency ⁸.

the universality and perpetuity of the Decalogue; and if the direction which accompanied other laws be conceived to have restricted the observance to the land of Canaan, it can apply only to those of a transitory nature, since the others might with equal reason have been observed elsewhere.

⁵ Matt. v. 17.

⁶ Matt. v. 18. Luke xvi. 17.

⁷ Matt. v. 19. x. 27, 28.

⁸ Acts xv. The Apostles in the first council holden at Jerusalem, after having pronounced the ceremonial law to be burthensome and unnecessary, enjoined upon the Gentiles, in the name of "the Holy Ghost," an observance of the Mosaic law, where it had a general

It follows, then, from these considerations, that though the law be abrogated, as a covenant insufficient and preparatory⁹, though its ceremonies have vanished, as the veil and covering of spiritual things, and its judicial institutions are dissolved with the economy of the Hebrew government, yet its moral pillars remain unshaken. The law, then, is abolished only so far as fulfilled and superseded by a more excellent dispensation. As its precepts prefigured this, they have terminated; as its appointments prepared for this, they were

character and moral tendency, and in the very terms, as well as in the spirit of the Mosaic law, (considered distinctly from the Decalogue) they prescribed unto the Gentiles "as necessary things," that they should "abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication;" inasmuch as these were descriptive of a disposition to idolatry, and adopted in opposition to the service of God. St. James concludes his advice, by intimating, that these instructions were permanent precepts of the law of Moses which was "read in every city." Vid. Acts xv. 1. 7. 10, 11. 19, 20, 21. 24. 28, 29. St. Paul, in his epistles, asserts the abrogation of the law, only as set up in opposition to the gospel, to which it was "a schoolmaster;" in comparison of which it was "elementary and beggarly;" but in reference to which, in its moral and spiritual character, it was "holy, just, and good." Vid. Rom. iii. 20. 24. 28. 31. viii. 4. Gal. iii. 24. iv. 9. 1 Tim. i. 8—10. v. 18. 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. where a Mosaic precept not in the Decalogue is said to be spoken "altogether for our sakes." Vid. Deut. xxv. 4. In this, as in other instances, where a moral import is couched under a figurative precept, we may say with St. Ambrose, "*evacuatur in Christo, non vetus Testamentum, sed velamen ejus.*" Epist. 76. Deut. xxii. 10. Rom. vii. 14. See lastly Acts xxiii. 5. where St. Paul admits the authority of a general precept, delivered in Exod. xxii. 28.

⁹ We are freed, also, from the curses of the law, "the ministration of death." Vid. Gal. iii. 13. 2 Cor. iii. 7, but not from its directive authority.

exclusively confined to the Hebrew nation ; as its commandments corresponded with the moral designs of the gospel, they were incorporated with, and should be observed under, the Christian covenant.

The Mosaic dispensation, inasmuch as it was restricted to one nation, and contrived to effect its purpose, by partial regulations, cannot be supposed to have been productive of that liberal and diffusive benevolence which characterizes the gospel, a covenant designed to embrace all nations, and to promote universal love. But though the peculiar privileges, which the first covenant conferred on the Israelites, led them to entertain an arrogant and unreasonable conceit, it is certain that the Mosaic law recommended throughout as much benevolence as was consistent with that distinction which it was intended to promote. The principles on which it is framed, may be always adopted with advantage, since it breathes, throughout, a fine spirit of moral equity ; of merciful regard to strangers, debtors, bondsmen¹, and even to the brute creation² ; and tends, by its literal and figurative precepts³, to awaken benevolence and charitable dispositions. It is deserving of remark, also, that there is a moral retribution observed in the regulation of the Mosaic law, the heavier transgressions against God, as murder, adultery, and a violation of the Sabbath, being punished with death, while offences

¹ Exod. xxi. 2. 7. 10. 20, 21. 26, 27. Levit. xix. 14—32. xxiv. 21. xxv. Deut. v. 14, 15. xv. 1—12. Maimon. More Nevoch. par. iii. cap. 39. p. 455. Edit. Buxtorf. 1629.

² Exod. xxiii. 12. Deut. v. 14. xxii. 6, 7.

³ Deut. xxii. 10. xxv. 4.

of a minor nature affecting men, have a milder character, and strict evidence is required in the administration of its decrees.

The five books of Moses present us with a compendious history of the world, from the creation to the arrival of the Israelites at the verge of Canaan, a period of above 2250 years. It is a wide description, gradually contracted; an account of one nation, preceded by a general sketch of the first state of mankind. The books are written in pure Hebrew, with an admirable diversity of style, always well adapted to the subject, yet characterised with the stamp of the same author; they are all evidently parts of the same work, and mutually strengthen and illustrate each other. They blend revelation and history in one point of view, impart laws, and describe their execution, exhibit prophecies, and relate their accomplishment.

Besides the Pentateuch, Moses is said to have composed many of the Psalms, and some have, though improperly, attributed to him all those between the 90th and 100th inclusive. He appears, however, to have been the first writer who was inspired in the production of sacred hymns, and those contained in the xvth chapter of Exodus, and the xxxiid of Deuteronomy, afford very beautiful models of his enraptured poetry. The book of Job has been, with some probability, supposed to have been written or translated by Moses, and many apocryphal works have been ascribed to him, by writers desirous of recommending their works under the sanction of his name. Cedrenus transferred into his history a book, which passed under the name of Moses, styled *Little Genesis* ⁴, and which contained

⁴ *Λεπτιγένεσις.*

many spurious particulars. It was extant in Hebrew in the time of St. Jerom, and was cited by him, but condemned as apocryphal, by the council of Trent. Others attribute to him an apocalypse, from which they pretend that St. Paul copied in ver. 15 of ch. vi. to the Galatians; but these, as well as those entitled the ascension, and the assumption of Moses, and some mysterious books, were probably fabricated by the Sethians, or Sethedians, an ancient sect of Gnostic heretics, who pretended to be derived from Seth, and to possess several books of the Patriarchs⁵.

⁵ Athanasii Synops. Sac. Script. tom. 2. p. 154. Edit. Paris, 1627.

OF THE

BOOK OF GENESIS.

THIS, which is the first book in order of the Pentateuch, is called Beresith in those Hebrew copies, which adopt the division of the Pentateuch into five books¹. This word signifies in the beginning, and being prefixed, it gave rise to the Hebrew custom of denominating the sacred books from their initial words respectively. The book, however, is usually entitled Genesis, from a Greek word², which imports generation. It was written by Moses, as the concurrent testimonies of all ages declare³, (according to some, in the land of Midian,

¹ Some private copies only are divided, those used in the Jewish synagogues are not.

² Γένεσις. Generation, production. It is remarkable that the New Testament begins with the same word, Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ.

³ Du Pin, Diss. Prel. Sect. 1. Huet. The mention which is made in chap. xii. 6. xiii. 7. of the Canaanites and Perizzites does not prove that the passages were written after the expulsion of those nations, as they import, probably, that these nations were thus in early possession of it. The mention, also, and enumeration of kings that reigned in Edom before there reigned any over the children of Israel," xxxvi. 31, have been thought by some to refer proleptically to kings, who, according to Divine promise, were to reign over

where Moses fed the flocks of his father-in-law, in the wilderness,) with design, it is said, to comfort the Hebrews in their servitude, by the example of constancy in their fathers, and by a display of the oracles and promises of God; as particularly of that remarkable revelation to Abraham, that "his seed should be a stranger in a land not theirs, should serve them, and be afflicted 400 years, and that God should judge that nation whom they should serve, and that afterwards they should come out with great substance⁴." Eusebius⁵ seems to intimate his respect for this opinion, but Theodoret⁶ and others suppose that the book was written in the wilderness after the promulgation of the law. A third hypothesis has been offered from the Rabbi Moses Ben Nachman, that God dictated to Moses all the contents of the Book during the forty days that he was permitted to have a communication with the Deity on Mount Sinai, and that at his descent

Israel, ch. xxxv. 11. Deut. xvii. 14; others imagine that they applied to Moses, who was king in Jeshurun, Deut. xxxiii. 5, and others; it is possible, however, that the remark was originally a marginal note which crept into the text; or that the account of the kings of Edom, which corresponds with that in the Book of Chronicles, was inserted by some prophet, or authorised person. See also Gen. ii. 11, 12; and Witsius' *Miscellanea Sacra*, tom. i. lib. ii. c. 4. The mention of Hebron in xiii. c. 18, and xxiii. c. 2, may have been inserted afterwards; see also xii. c. 6.

⁴ Gen. xv. 13, 14. From the birth of Isaac to the deliverance from Egypt were 405 years. The 430 years mentioned in Exodus xii. 40, include the twenty-five years of Abraham's sojourning in Canaan, before the birth of Isaac. Vid. Patrick.

⁵ Euseb. *Præp. Evan.* lib. ii. cap. 7. p. 52.

⁶ Theodoret. *Quæstiones in Genesin.* Opera, tom. i. p. 1642. Bedæ *Venerabilis Expositio in Genes.* lib. i. c. 2. Lond. 1693.

he committed the whole to writing. It is, however, as impossible as it is of little consequence, to determine which of these opinions is best founded. It is sufficient for us to know, that Moses was assisted by the spirit of infallible truth, in the composition of this sacred work⁷, which he deemed a proper introduction to the laws and judgments delivered in the subsequent books, as exhibiting the ground upon which the divine claims to worship are established, and the considerations upon which his statutes were made, when God is represented as the Creator to whom all obedience is due.

The unity and attributes which are ascribed to the Almighty, though directly opposed to the idolatrous notions which prevailed, are such as are agreeable to the perfections of God, while the description which Moses gives in his book concerning the creation, as relating to circumstances, which occurred previously to the existence of mankind, could be derived only from immediate revelation⁸. It was received by the Jews with full conviction of its truth, on the authority of that inspiration under which Moses was known to act. When the work was first delivered, many persons then living must have been competent to decide on the fidelity with which he relates those events which were subsequent to the creation. They must have heard of and believed the remarkable incidents in the lives of the Patriarchs, the prophecies which they

⁷ Rom. iv. 3. Gal. iii. 8. Jam. ii. 23.

⁸ Origen, Homil. 1 in Genesin. Opera, vol. ii. p. 52. Edit. Par. 1732.

uttered, and the actions which they performed ; for the longevity of man in the earlier ages of the world, rendered tradition, in some measure the criterion of truth. In the days of Moses, the channels of information must have been as yet uncorrupted ; for though ages had already elapsed, even 2432 years before the birth of the sacred historian, yet those relations were easily ascertained, which might have been conveyed by seven persons from Adam to Moses ; and that the traditions were secure from error, we shall immediately be convinced, if we consider that Methusalem was 340 years old when Adam died, and that he lived till the year of the flood, when Noah had attained 600 years ⁹. In like manner Shem conveyed tradition from Noah to Abraham, for he conversed with both a considerable time. Isaac, also, the son of Abraham, lived to instruct Joseph in the history of his predecessors, and Amram, the father of Moses, was contemporary with Joseph ¹. The Israelites, then, must have been able, by tradition, to judge how far the Mosaic account

⁹ Adam died, A. M. 930, 126 years only before the birth of Noah, and therefore must have been seen by many of Noah's contemporaries. Lamech, the father of Noah, had certainly seen Adam and his children, being born fifty-six years before Adam's death ; and Noah himself might have seen several memorials existing, to prove the truth of those events afterwards recorded by Moses, for Noah died only two years before the birth of Abraham ; and Isaac might have seen Shem and Salah, who conversed with Noah many years.

¹ The tradition then was conveyed through Adam, through Methuselah, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, and Amram to Moses, seven intermediate persons. This account of the longevity of mankind, in the first ages of the world, is confirmed by Manetho, Berosus, Hestiaëus, &c.

was consistent with truth². If the memory of man reached beyond the period assigned to the creation, they must have disbelieved the Mosaic history; but if, through so small a number of immediate predecessors, they could trace up the origin of mankind to Adam, we need not wonder at the implicit veneration which ratified the records of the sacred historian; which accepted a revelation, confirmed by every received account, and stamped by every sanction of divine authority. The sacred character of the book is established also by the internal evidence of its inspiration; by a detail of the creation which carries with it the presumption and the marks of truth; by the several predictions afterwards fully accomplished; and, lastly, by our Saviour and his apostles, who have cited from it at least twenty-seven passages *verbatim* in the New Testament, and thirty-eight according to the sense³.

Genesis contains the history of 2369 years to the death of Joseph, or thereabouts, if we follow the account of the ages of the Patriarchs, and suppose the flood to have happened about 1656 years after the creation⁴.

² Euseb. Præp. Evang. l. vii. c. 6—8. p. 304. Edit. Par. 1628.

³ As Rivet has elaborately calculated.

⁴ The creation of the world began, according to Usher, October 23, 4004 years before the birth of Christ, if we follow the Hebrew text. The Septuagint version places it 5872, and the Samaritan 4700 before the vulgar æra. The Septuagint reckons 2262 years before the flood; the Samaritan only 1307. Vid. Jackson's Chron. Tab. Aug. Civit. Dei, lib. xii. cap. 10. p. 308. Edit. Par. 1685. Newton's Hist. of Antedil. World, p. 98. Strauchius,

The extended accounts of the Chaldean, Egyptian, Chinese, and Hindû Chronology, which reach far beyond all bounds of probability⁵, and the magnified calculations of some other nations are now justly considered as the fictions of national vanity, or the exaggerations of erroneous computation. They are often in themselves contradictory⁶, and utterly inconsistent with all observations on the appearance of nature; all philosophical inquiry; and the advancement of mankind in arts, sciences, and refinement. These improbable fabrications are delivered by authors who lived long after Moses; their veracity is impeached in other instances; and their general accounts are enveloped in fable, and tinctured by credulity. The learned Halley has observed, that the oldest astronomical observations made by the Egyptians, of which we have any

Brev. Chron. translated by Sault, p. 166. 176, &c. Capel. Chron. Sac. in Appar. Walton. Some place the creation about the time of the vernal equinox, since Moses and the sacred writers reckon their first month, Abib, from that time. (Vid. also Virgil, Georg. II. l. 336 et seq.) but this was in memory of their deliverance from Egypt. The first month in civil calculations was the first after the autumnal equinox: this was called Tisri, and answers to part of our September.

⁵ The Babylonians reckoned up 33,000 years; the Chaldeans, in the time of Cicero, talked of 47,000; and Manetho, jealous for the reputation of his country, carried back his chronological accounts to 36,525 years. Vid. Cicer. de Divin. lib. i. Bryant's Mythol. vol. 3. Petav. &c. Maurice's History of Hindostan.

⁶ Manetho professes to have transcribed his Dynasties from some pillars of Hermes Trismegistus. As Sanchoniatho also derived his Theology from Hermes, different accounts must be supposed to have been drawn from the same source. Vid. Stilling. Orig. Sac. lib. i. cap. 2. The fountain, or the streams, must have been corrupt.

account at this day, were later than 300 years before Christ⁷.

The Chaldæan calculations are unworthy of attention, since they contradict the account of the flood, and are quite irreconcilable with the general testimony of ancient history; and the chimerical accounts of the Chinese, written in hieroglyphics, and rescued imperfectly from destruction, cannot properly be produced in support of any theory, repugnant to more authentic chronicles⁸, much less can they be suffered to invalidate the chronology of the Scriptures. The incredible and contradictory accounts which these⁹ nations have

⁷ Sanchoniatho, the Phœnician Historian, according to the most extended accounts of Porphyry, flourished long after Moses, probably not less than two centuries. Manetho and Berosus lived not more than 300 years before Christ. Vid. Bochart. Geogr. Sac. part 2. lib. ii. cap. 17. p. 855. Edit. Cadomi, 1646. Scaliger Not. in Eusebii Chronicon, p. 12. et Canon Isagoge, lib. iii. apud Thesaurum Temporum. Edit. Amst. 1658. Præparat. Evangelic. lib. x. cap. 4. 9. Diodorus Biblioth. Hist. lib. i. Lactantius de Origin. Erroris, lib. ii. cap. 11. Stillingfleet Origines Sacræ, book i. ch. ii. § 4. Vossius de Idol. lib. i. cap. 28. Wootton's Reflect. on Ant. and Mod. Learning, and Stackhouse's Hist. of Bible, book i. ch. 5.

⁸ One of the Chinese Emperors, about 213 years before Christ, ordered all their historical records to be destroyed. The Chinese have not any work in an intelligible character, above 2200 years old; Father Amiot considers their nation as a colony, derived from the immediate descendants of Noah; and their traditional knowledge, and religious doctrines, when freed from ignorant and superstitious additions, exhibit a correspondence with the Patriarchal principles. Vid. Martini, p. 2, 3. 9. Mém. de l'Hist. des Sciences, &c. Chinois, vol. i. Par. 1776.

⁹ The Greeks could produce no dates beyond 550 years before Christ, and little historical information before the Olympiads, which began 775 years before the Christian æra. Herodotus, who flou-

fabricated, appear to have been swollen to so great a magnitude, by varying the modes of calculation, by separating events which were contemporary, and by substituting lunar for solar periods. They are the misrepresentations of pride, or the errors of inattention, and utterly unworthy to be put in competition with the accurate reports and documents of revealed information¹.

rished less than five centuries before our Saviour, begins with fable ; Thucydides rejects, as uncertain, almost all that preceded the Peloponnesian war ; and Plutarch ventured not beyond the time of Theseus, who lived a little before the ministry of Samuel. Vid. Plutarch's Life of Theseus. Strabo's Geograph. lib. xvii.

¹ Some difficulties, equally futile and unreasonable, have likewise been started against the probability of that account, which derives the whole race of mankind from one common stock, notwithstanding the diversity of complexion, and the separation of country. Some of those who deny that climate and local circumstances are sufficient to account for every dissimilarity which is discovered in the appearance of different nations, have maintained that Ham and his descendants were condemned by Providence to bear that mark of the Divine displeasure. The name of Ham חם signifies hot, or dark coloured : and the descendants of Ham are stated to have every where a peculiar membrane under the skin, and are more or less black or swarthy, as the Chinese, the Malays, the Phœnicians, Lybians, the Hindoos, &c. The supposed difficulties of emigration are likewise obviated by recent discoveries in geography ; for these demonstrate a much greater proximity in countries, between which no communication was conceived to exist in the earlier ages of the world, than obtains between those from which early emigrations have confessedly been made, and those to which they have been directed. It is now determined, by positive examination, that the north-east part of Asia is either connected with the north-west part of America, or separated from it by a very inconsiderable distance ; though, indeed, this discovery was not necessary to prove that the savage nations of the western continent must have derived their origin from

Every circumstance, indeed, in the Mosaic account, bears, if impartially considered, a striking feature of probability and truth; and the whole is far different from the wild and inconsistent theories, which have at different times been imagined and framed by fanciful men²; whose crude and extravagant conjectures concerning the creation, only prove the impossibility of treating such a subject without the aid of inspiration. Moses describes the great work of the creation, not in

the same common source as the eastern nations; since, not to insist on the arguments for the recency of their establishment, which might be drawn from their uncivilized state, and their rude ignorance of the useful arts, they retained the vestiges of opinions and customs, which were so remarkably similar to those that prevailed in the East, as evidently to point out a former connection. A reverence for the Sabbath, and an acquaintance with many appointments of the Mosaic institution, were observed to exist in America, by the first discoverers of that country, too numerous, indeed, to be the result of accident or casual resemblance; all the Americans had some traditional acquaintance with the particulars of the Mosaic history; as of the flood; of one family preserved; and of the confusion of tongues. The Mexicans had a custom of tinging the threshold of the door with blood, possibly in allusion to the circumstances that distinguished the institution of the Passover, and the Canadians had even some idea of the Messiah. Huet. *Demon. Evang.* cap. vii. § iii. *Lerii Navig. in Brasil.* cap. 16. *Joann. de Laet. Antwerp. Not. ad Dissert. Grot. de Orig. Gent. American.* *Acosta's Hist.* lib. v. cap. 28. *Peter Mart. Decad.* iv. cap. 8. and *Decad.* viii. cap. 9. *Geor. Horn. de Orig. Gent. American.* *Harris's Introd. to Collect. of Voyages.* *Smith's Essay on the Causes of Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species.* *Herod.* l. iv. c. 64. *Sir William Jones's Discourse on Origin and Families of Nations.* *Asiatic Researches*, vol. iii.

² *Cudworth's Intel. System*, Preface to *Universal History*. *Clarke's Demonst. of Being and Attributes of God*.

an exact philosophical detail, but in a style adapted to popular apprehensions, and with a concise magnificence, designed to impress mankind with just notions of God, and of his attributes³. The account is given without any attempt to establish system, and in a manner levelled to all capacities, though universally admired for its sublimity⁴. It represents the whole world to be material and created, in opposition to the prevailing notions, that the heavenly bodies were animated by an eternal power, and that the earth was eternal. The divine agency is familiarised to us under images and descriptions accommodated to human conceptions, and though the real mode of God's operation and proceedings cannot be apprehended by us at present, they are in some measure subjected to our understanding, under analogous representations, which illustrate their character.

But notwithstanding the nature of God's agency is adumbrated under terms and expressions adapted to human actions, the account of the creation is not to be considered as allegorical, or merely figurative, any more than are the history of the temptation, and of the fall from innocence; since the whole description is unquestionably delivered as real, and is so considered by all the sacred writers⁵. In the explanation of Scripture,

³ Some think that the world was instantaneously created, though represented by Moses, as performed in succession of time, in accommodation to our conceptions, but it is more reasonable and consistent with the account to believe, that it was completed in detail. Moses speaks of the creation of the universe, but treats of the heavenly bodies only so far as they respected the earth.

⁴ Longin. de Sublim. sect. 9.

⁵ John viii. 44. 2 Cor. xi. 3. 1 Tim. ii. 13. Rev. xii. 9. Allix's

indeed, no interpretation which tends to supersede the literal sense should be admitted: and for this reason also it is, that those speculations which are spun out with a view to render particular relations in this book more consistent with our notions of probability, should be received at least with great diffidence and caution. To represent the formation of the woman from Adam's rib, as a work performed in an imaginary sense, or as presented to the mind in vision, seems to be too great a departure from the plain rules which should be observed in the construction of Scripture ⁶, and inconsistent with the expositions of the sacred writers. So likewise the wrestling of Jacob with an angel ⁷, which is sometimes considered as a scenical representation addressed to the fancy of the Patriarch, should rather be contemplated like the temptation of Abraham ⁸, as a literal transaction, though, perhaps, of a figurative character; like that, it was designed to convey information by action instead of words, of certain particulars

Reflect. on Gen. Waterland's Gen. Pref. to Script. vind. Watty's Essay towards Vindic. of Mosaic Hist. Nichol's confer. with a Theist, part i. p. 136.

⁶ Gen. i. 22, 23. This is related by Moses as a real operation, though performed while Adam was in a deep sleep, and is so considered by St. Paul. 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9.

⁷ Ch. xxxii. 24, 25.

⁸ Ch. xxii. The enjoined sacrifice of Isaac is properly considered as a typical representation, which was understood by Abraham to prefigure the sacrifice of Christ. Vid. John viii. 56. But it cannot be admitted, that the command was merely an information by action given at the request of Abraham, as this, notwithstanding the arguments of the learned Warburton, must be considered as inconsistent with the passages in Scripture, where God is said to have tempted Abraham. Gen. xxii. 1. Heb. xi. 17. Vide Div. Legat. book vi. sect. 5.

which it imported the Patriarch to know⁹; and which he readily collected from a mode of revelation, so customary in the earlier ages of the world, however incongruous it may seem to those who cannot raise their minds to the contemplation of any economy which they have not experienced, and who proudly question every event not agreeable to their notions of propriety.

Moses being employed by God to impart his revelation to mankind, begins his work with the history of the Fall, as of the event on which the necessity of divine instruction and of the intervention of a mediator was founded. After having related the disobedience of Adam, and its punishment, softened by the gracious promise of a future seed, that should bruise the seducer to sin¹, he describes the multiplication of mankind, and the evil consequences of the entailed corruption; the intermixture of the descendants of Seth "the sons of God," with the family of Cain, "the daughters of men;" the progress of impiety, and its punishment;

⁹ Ch. xxxii. 24, 25. The successful struggle which Jacob maintained, was intended to convey to him an assurance of that deliverance from the hand of Esau, which he had piously intreated; it is represented as an actual event by Moses, and is so received by Hosea, ch. xii. 4. St. Jerom understands it as figurative of spiritual conflicts which we are to maintain. Hieron. in cap. 6. Epist. ad Ephes.

¹ Gen. iii. 15. It is remarkable that in this first prophecy of the Messiah, he is promised as the "seed of the woman." The Jews were at a loss to account for the restriction, of which the reason is revealed to us in the account of the miraculous conception of Christ by a virgin. It deserves to be noticed, that the bruising of the Messiah's heel was literally accomplished by the crucifixion. The head likewise of the serpent is said to be the seat of life, his heart being under the throat, and hence, his chief care, when attacked, is to secure his head.

the preservation of Noah, and of his family, from amidst the general destruction by the flood: he proceeds to treat of God's covenant with man; of the dispersion of the descendants of Noah; of the confusion of tongues; of the covenant made with Abraham, which implied a promise to rescind the sentence pronounced against Adam²; of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; and of such particulars in the lives of the Patriarchs, as were best calculated to illustrate the proceedings and judgments of the Almighty, the consequences of human actions, and the rise and progress of religion. He concludes with the interesting story of Joseph; of the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt; of the death of Jacob after uttering prophetic blessings relating to the Patriarchs; and of the future conduct and circumstances of their descendants, multiplied into the twelve tribes of Israel, distinctly characterised by those features which in subsequent times they disclosed. Thus have we a clear, though short, history of the first ages of the world, which profane writers had in vain endeavoured to rescue from the shades of antiquity. The whole is related with a concise and noble simplicity of style suitable to the dignity of the subject. The sacred writer, anxious only to communicate important intelligence, describes the earlier periods with rapidity, and dilates more copiously on the interesting transactions of which the effects and influence were recently experienced. In the brief sketch, however, even of the first ages, Moses, by the selection of individual families for consideration, delineates a striking picture of the manners of each period; and by occasionally

² Matt. xxii. 32. Vide also Ezekiel xvi. 53.

descending to the minuteness of biography, he affords a lively illustration of the smaller features, and familiar manners of the Patriarchal ages.

In the course of his history, Moses describes events as they occurred, and characters as they appeared. The actions of the patriarchs and favourite ancestors of the Jews, however exceptionable, and even the deceitful cruelty of Levi (from whom the historian was descended), as also the curses denounced against him³, are related without disguise. One circumstance must, however, be remembered by those who would understand the scope and design of the sacred writer, in his detail of particular relations contained in this book, which is, that he always kept in mind the promise of the Messiah, and was desirous of showing, that the expectation of this great object of the Jewish hopes was predominant in all times, and influenced the opinions and manners of every generation⁴. The recollection of this will enable us to perceive the reason of many particulars mentioned in the book, which might otherwise appear extraordinary and exceptionable. It will explain the conduct of Lot's daughters⁵; the

³ Ch. xxxiv. 13—25. xlix. 5, 6.

⁴ Eve, when she brought forth her first-born son, seems to have imagined that she had given birth to the promised seed.—See Gen. iv. 1.

⁵ R. Samuel and R. Tanchumah, on Gen. xix. 32. This incest certainly proceeded, under perverted views excited by the malignant influence of Satan, from a desire of producing the Messiah: as Lot's daughters were previously distinguished for chastity; as it was a concerted and deliberate proceeding; and as they wished to perpetuate the memory of the action, by the names which they gave the children; for Moab implies from my father, and Ben-ammi, son of my people. Vid. Allix's Reflections on Gen.

violent desire of Sarah for a son; the solicitude of Isaac to remove the barrenness of Rebekah; and the contention between the wives of Jacob. In conformity with this design also Moses relates the jealousies between Ishmael and Isaac; and between Esau and Jacob; and many other minute and singular particulars, which an historian of his dignity would not have condescended to describe, but with a view to illustrate the general persuasion of, and gradual preparation for, the coming of the Messiah.

The book contains likewise some signal and direct prophecies concerning Christ, described by Jacob as “the angel which redeemed him from all evil⁶,” and other interspersed predictions; which by their accomplishment authenticate the truth of the Scripture accounts. The memorable prophecies with respect to the enlargement of Japhet, the abode of God in the tents of Shem, the servitude of Canaan, and the selection of the tribe of Judah as sovereign⁷, wonderfully illustrate the fore-knowledge of God, and the economy of the divine government⁸. Moses describes particularly the predictions of Noah and Jacob, who were occasionally enlightened by the Holy Spirit, to unfold parts of the divine economy, and to keep alive the confidence and hopes of mankind, the sacred writer

⁶ Gen. iii. 15. xii. 3. xviii. 18. xxi. 12. xxii. 18. xxvi. 4. xxviii. 14. xlviii. 16. xlix. 10. 18.

⁷ xlix. 8—10.

⁸ Compare Gen. ix. 27. with Exod. xxiii. 20. Psalm cxxxv. 4. Numb. xxxv. 34. Deut. xii. 11. John i. 14. Rom. ix. 5. Col. ii. 2. iv. 8, 9. Heb. viii. 1, 2. Vide Fulleri Miscell. Theolog. lib. 2. c. 4. p. 168. Oxon. 1616.

thus “delivering the prophecies which have been uttered ever since the world began ⁹.”

It may be briefly observed, that many particulars in pagan history, as well as many circumstances in the present appearance of the world, both natural and moral, tend to prove the truth of the accounts which are presented to us in this book ¹. Traces of the Mosaic history, and of the events and characters which it describes, are discoverable throughout the pages of profane authors. Vestiges of the Deluge daily point out its extensive effects. The spot on which Sodom and Gomorrah stood, still indicates a sulphureous property ²; the various manners, cus-

⁹ Gen. vi. 3. ix. 11. 25—27. xiii. 15, 16, comp. with 1 Kings iv. 21. xv. 5. 13—18. xvi. 12. xvii. 8. 20. xviii. 14. xxi. 12, 13. xxv. 23. compare with 2 Sam. viii. 14. and 2 Kings xiv. 7. xxvi. 4. xxvii. 28, 29. 39, &c. xxxv. 11. xl. 13. 18, 19. xli. 29—31. xlvi. 1—4. xlviii. 19. xlix. 3—27. i. 24. comp. with Joshua xiv. xvii. Gen. xlix. 17. with Judges xviii. 10.

¹ Compare Hamilton's Journey across the Desert, and Keppel's Narrative, vol 1. c. 7. p. 143. with Genesis xxxi. 40.

² The lake Asphaltites is a sea of very bituminous nature: it throws up great quantities of asphaltos, a drug formerly used by the Egyptians and other nations for embalming, &c. Vid. Maundrell's Journey. Pocock. Univer. Hist. vol. ii. book i. ch. vii. page 418. Keil's Exam. of Reflect. on Theor. p. 148. Waterland's Pref. to Vind. Jenkins's Reasonableness, vol. ii. p. 526. also Joseph. Antiq. lib. i. cap. 9 and 11. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. v. cap. 16. p. 262. edit. Harduin. and Taciti Hist. lib. v. sect. 7. The account of the latter author is remarkable. He relates that the plains where the cities stood, were said, “olim uberes, magnisque urbibus habitatos, fulminum jactu arsisse: et manere vestigia, terramque ipsam specie torridam, vim frugiferam perdidisse. Nam cuncta sponte edita, aut manu sata, sive herba tenus aut flore, seu solitam in speciem adolvere, atra, et inania velut in cinerem vanescunt.” He adds,

toms, and superstitions of many ancient nations, unchanged during a long succession of ages, still remain to prove the fidelity and exactness of the descriptions given by Moses³; and we witness in the predominant genius and disposition of the modern Jews, a wonderful correspondence with the illustration of their ancient character. No length of time, or difference of condition, hath been able to efface those strong features of national peculiarity which are imprinted on this singular people, and which show themselves so remarkably in their prejudices, conduct, and manners, in different countries, and under different governments. The reason and foundation of their observances and ceremonies, are traced out in this book; and though in the subsequent parts of the Pentateuch the laws are laid down by which their civil and religious conduct are influenced, yet here chiefly are described the causes and sources from which they are derived, as may be instanced in the cases of the Sabbath, and of the Circumcision⁴, not to mention other particulars. Genesis

“Ego sicut inclitas quondam urbes igne cœlesti flagrasse concesserim, ita halitu lacus infici terram, corrumpi superfusum spiritum, eoque fœtus segetum et autumnî putrescere reor, solo cœloque juxta gravi.” Vid. also Strabo’s Geogr. lib. xvi. Thevenot’s Travels, and Volney’s Voyage en Syrie, &c. vol. i. p. 281. Wood’s Essay on Homer, p. 51. note (h).

³ His geographical accounts, and history of the origin of nations, also are consistent with the most authentic memorials. Vid. Josephus, Grotius, and Bochart. Harmer’s Observations on divers Passages of Scripture, &c. Huet. Demon. Prop. iv. Avenarius in verbo גר’.

⁴ Allix’s Reflections on Genesis, republished in Bp. Watson’s Theological Tracts, vol. i. Vid. Genesis xxxii. 32. Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. vii. c. ix. page 513.

was, also, very properly prefixed to those books in which Moses communicated the divine commands, since not only are herein displayed the most impressive proofs of God's existence and attributes, but in it likewise is shown the authority from which Moses derived his commission as a lawgiver; and it was, therefore, probably written as preparatory to the promulgation of the law ⁵. It is also excellently serviceable to illustrate the great design and tendency of revelation; which is ever delivered in a manner conformable to the fallen and depraved nature of man. It describes the origin of a distinct immaterial spirit, derived immediately from God; and the first institution of the marriage union. It points out the true source of evil, in an account consistent with the divine attributes, and confirmed by the character and appearance of mankind in every age. Every moral discourse, as well as every religious system, must be built on the foundation and conviction that man was created in innocence, but degraded by sin; and hence he is prone to evil, though susceptible of good.

On account of the dignity and importance of the subject, and of the serious attention which it deserved, the Jews were forbidden to read the beginning of Genesis till they had attained the sacerdotal age of thirty years. A book, indeed, which describes the first creation and lapse of man; which treats of God's counsels and intercourse with his creatures; which opens the prospect of redemption, and the grand scheme of prophecy; and which exemplifies the high obliga-

⁵ Euseb. *Præp. Evan.* lib. iii. c. iii. p. 301. Isid. *Pelusiot.* lib. iii. *Epist.* 78. edit. Paris, 1638.

tions and interests of mankind, cannot be considered with too mature and deliberate judgment.

A work entitled the Book of Enoch, which was brought in an Ethiopic version by Bruce from Abyssinia, was found in one copy of the Scriptures placed before the book of Job. It is a translation from the Greek, and contains visions respecting fallen angels and giants, whose crimes are represented to have brought down the deluge. It has been always deemed apocryphal, and is of uncertain origin, but generally supposed to have been written by a Jew of Palestine, after the captivity, as the author evidently borrows from Daniel. Dr. Laurence supposes it to have been composed in the reign of Herod: it contains an intimation of three Divine Persons ⁶.

⁶ Book of Enoch, published by Richard Laurence, present Archbishop of Cashel, Oxford, 1821.

OF THE

BOOK OF EXODUS.

THE title of the second book of Moses is, likewise, descriptive of its contents. The word Exodus¹, which is of Greek origin, implies emigration; and the book relates the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, after a description of their state of servitude; of the appointment of Moses; and of the stupendous miracles by which he defeated the arts and enchantments of the magicians, and effected the deliverance of the people², and which were concerted with peculiar reference to the rites and superstitions of the Egyptians. It presents us also with the account of their journey through the wilderness; of the solemn promulgation of the law at Mount Sinai; of the delivery of the Decalogue; and of the building of the Tabernacle. It is universally allowed to have been written by Moses; and words in the book of Exodus are cited as the words of Moses, by Daniel, David, and other sacred writers; to whom it is useless to refer, since our Saviour him-

¹ From Εξοδος, a departure, or going out. It is called by the Jews, ואלה שמות; “and these *are* the names,” which are the initial words of the book.

² See Turner’s Dissertation on Miracles, cap. iv. sect. 1. p. 409.

self always distinguishes the law (by which the whole Pentateuch is implied) from the prophets, as the work of Moses; and Rivet has observed, that twenty-five passages are quoted by Christ and his apostles out of this book in express words, and nineteen as to the substance, which will be found not to be an exaggerated account.

Exodus contains a history of about 145 years, or perhaps of a somewhat shorter period. It affords a very minute and circumstantial detail of the fulfilment of the declaration made by God to Abraham, with respect to the bondage of his descendants in Egypt, the judgments to be inflicted on the Egyptians, and their departure from thence with great substance³. Many of the circumstances therein recorded are confirmed by the testimony of heathen writers⁴. This, perhaps, it is unnecessary to mention, for our conviction of the truth of its relations is built on much higher evidence. The intrinsic marks of sincerity in the Sacred Writings are usually too numerous to require any additional support.

This Book contains some predictions, of which it

³ Gen. xv. 13, 14.

⁴ Numenius speaks of the opposition of the Egyptian magicians to the miracles of Moses. Euseb. Præp. Evangel. lib. ix. cap. 8. p. 411. Edit. Paris. 1628. The Exodus under Moses is mentioned by Palemon and Chæremon; as cited by Africanus in Eusebius; by Manetho: (vid. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. p. 1337.) by Trogus Pompeius; and by Tacitus, with some absurd additions from perverted information. Vid. Tacit. Hist. lib. v. § 3. tom. ii. p. 350. Edit. Traject. Batavor. Other writers, as especially Orpheus, or the author of the verses ascribed to him, speak of the delivery of the two tablets of the law from God, and of the institution of the Hebrew rites. See also Diodorus Siculus, Bibliothec. Historic. tom. 1. lib. iii. p. 145. and Eclogæ ex. lib. xi. tom. 2. Edit. Wetsten. Amstelodam. 1705.

relates also the accomplishment; as that of the deliverance of the Israelites, which Moses foresaw⁵ and effected; and of the support of the Divine presence which was to accompany them⁶. It likewise describes some which were not fulfilled till after his death, as that concerning the gradual conquest of Canaan⁷, the future division and allotment of the land; and its security from the desire of its enemies to invade it, while its males three times a year should appear before the Lord⁸; and farther also, those which related to the revolutions that were to take place in the government of the Jews; their future subjections, captivities, deliverances, and returns.

It may throw some light upon this book, as well as contribute to our general admiration of Scripture, if we observe, that the events recorded to have happened under the old dispensation, are often strikingly prefigurative of those which occur under the new; and that the temporal circumstances of the Israelites seem designedly to shadow out the spiritual condition of the Christian church. The connection is ever obvious, and points out the consistency of the divine purpose, and the harmony deliberately contrived to subsist between both dispensations. Thus in the servitude

⁵ Exodus vii. 4, 5. xi. 8. and chap. xii.

⁶ Chap. xxxiii. 14.

⁷ Chap. xii. 24. xv. 14—17. xxiii. 22, 23. 28—31. xxxiii. 2. And see Joshua xxiv. 12.

⁸ Moses predicted the constant miracles of protection during the time of worship at the feast of the Passover, at that of Pentecost, and of Tabernacles. Vid. Exod. xxxiv. 23, 24. the accomplishment of which prediction furnished reiterated evidence of the divine authority of the Mosaic law.

and afflictions of the Israelites are described the sufferings of the church. In the deliverance from Egypt is foreshown its redemption⁹; and the journey through the wilderness is a lively representation of a Christian's pilgrimage through life, to his inheritance of everlasting bliss. So also, without too minute a reference, it may be observed, that the manna of which the Israelites did eat¹, and the rock of which they drank², as well as the brazen serpent by which they were healed, were severally typical of correspondent particulars that were to obtain under the Christian establishment³; as under the sacrifices and ceremonial service of the church, of which the institution is here recorded, was described the more spiritual worship of the gospel⁴. It deserves also to be particularly considered, in confirmation of the truth of the events recorded in this book, as established by permanent proofs, that the wonderful destruction of the first-born of the Egyptians was commemorated throughout all ages of the Jewish history, by the redemption of the first-born⁵, by the separation of the Levites, and by the observance of the passover, which ordinance also connected the Hebrew with the Christian dispensation, inasmuch as it was prophetic of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as instituted by Christ. Similar observations might be

⁹ Zacharias applies the very words of the temporal to the spiritual deliverance. Luke i. 68—79.

¹ John vi. 32—38. Rev. ii. 17.

² 1 Cor. x. 1—6. Gal. iv. 22. 24. Col. ii. 17.

³ St. Jerom carries these ideas to a very fanciful extreme. Vid. Hieron. de 42. Mansion. De Veste Sacerdot., &c.

⁴ Heb. x.

⁵ Exodus xiii. 1—16. Numb. iii. 11—22.

made with respect to the feast of tabernacles, and that of Pentecost, commemorative of the sojourning in the wilderness, and of the delivery of the law from Mount Sinai ⁶.

It is necessary farther to remark, that if we would understand the reason and intention of many injunctions contained in this book, we must recollect that the great design, with which they were framed, was to preserve the Israelites a distinct and independent people, and to prevent their intercourse with other nations; lest they, who were to be entrusted with the sacred deposit of the inspired writings, and from whom, as from the seed of Abraham, the Messiah was to arise, should catch the infection of idolatry; or by mingling with the Gentiles, render the accomplishment of the promises doubtful. The institutions were adapted to a spiritual service, and the instructions calculated to produce a moral and beneficial effect. The many cautions against idolatry, and the precepts levelled against whatever might tend to promote its influence ⁷; the nice discriminations, the peculiar and alienating prohibitions, which precluded the Israelites from associating with other nations, and the political institutions designed to attach them to their country, were all devised with a view to the accomplishment of this important design. And as not only the country, not only the tribe, but

⁶ See Jamieson's use of sacred history, vol. i. p. 47—50.

⁷ Maimon. *More Nevoch.* p. ii. c. xxxvii. and *Levit.* xix. 19. 27, 28. xxi. 3. which passages contain laws that were probably directed against idolatrous and superstitious practices. Vid. *Ezra* x. 2, 3. *Spencer de Leg. Heb.* vol. i. lib. 2. cap. 20. Edit. Cantab. 1727.

the individual family was foretold, from which the Messiah should spring, it was requisite to ascertain exactly the lineage and descent of each. Hence were the seeds of jealousy industriously sown between the different tribes, and the younger preferred to the elder. Under this just apprehension, the laws enjoined to ascertain the virginity of maidens will be judged necessary; and the punishment decreed against adultery will not appear disproportioned or severe. These instances are produced only by way of illustration; and by attending to the views of God in the establishment of their religious polity, we shall always find much cause to admire the wisdom of his laws⁸; though, indeed, we are too little acquainted with the ancient manners of the Hebrew nation, and of other nations with whom it came in contact, to understand the full scope and importance of every particular injunction. The precepts themselves are often grounded upon events which are recorded, and establish the truth of the history.

It should be further observed, that this book is signalized by several remarkable particulars, which indicate the intervention and fore-knowledge of God, and which exemplify the means by which he rendered his appointments subservient to the establishment of permanent evidences and testimonies in support of his dispensations. It records the revelations of himself graciously imparted under a new and characteristic designation of his eternal attributes and existence⁹.

⁸ Maimon. More Nevoch. part. ii. cap. xxvi. xxxvii. p. 258. and 296. Edit. Buxtorf. Basil. 1629.

⁹ Exodus iii. 14. xxxiv. 6, 7.

It relates the institution of the ordinance of the Pass-over, not only as a typical appointment designed to be figurative of the atonement of Christ through all ages, till a sacrifice should be perfected by his death¹; but which also, by a remarkable and ever-memorable direction of God, was to be regarded as constituting a new period, figurative, perhaps, of the commencement of the Christian æra², which was to take its rise from the nativity of Him whose memorial was to be celebrated as the true paschal lamb. The regulations also relating to the offerings and appurtenances of the tabernacle³, and to the consecration of Aaron and his sons⁴, minutely described with all the circumstances, demonstrate the attention and care with which the public appointments and ministration of divine service, even in the wilderness, were provided for by the Almighty.

¹ Chap. xii. 3—20.

² Chap. xii. 2. 14. 1 Kings vi. 1.

³ Chap. xxv. xxvi.

⁴ Chap. xxviii.

OF THE

BOOK OF LEVITICUS.

THE third book in the order of the Pentateuch is called Leviticus¹, in the Latin and English Bibles, because in it are described the office and duties of the Levites; or rather, agreeably to the account of Bishop Patrick, because it contains the laws of the Jewish rites and religious sacrifices, of which the charge was committed to Aaron the Levite, and to his descendants, who were consecrated by divine appointment to the priesthood; being assisted in the performance of their sacred office by a second branch of Levi's family, which, by an appropriate title, was called the tribe of Levi²; and obtained the privilege of officiating as a second order of the priesthood, in recompense of the ready zeal that it displayed against idolatry, and the worshippers of the golden calf³.

¹ Λευϊτικόν, in Greek.

² Godwyn's Moses and Aaron, lib. i. ch. v. Heb. vii. 11.

³ Aaron was appointed to the priesthood before the idolatrous proceeding here alluded to. What opposition he made to the perverse inclinations of the people is not mentioned. He appears to have been compelled to submit; and probably he designed to discountenance the idolaters by choosing as a symbol of the Divine presence one of those very images which they knew to have provoked God's

The Jews, according to their custom, denominate the book from the first word in the Hebrew ⁴; and imagine, in agreement with some fanciful notions of the Masorites, from the particular size of one letter in the word, that it has some mysterious signification; but these conceits it would perhaps be somewhat difficult to explain, and of but little use to discuss.

That Moses was the author of this book is proved, not only by the general arguments that demonstrate him to have written all the Pentateuch, but by particular passages in other books of Scripture, wherein it is expressly cited as his inspired work ⁵. The laws of rites and ceremonies which it contains were delivered from God to Moses in the first month of the second year after the departure from Egypt; that is, about A. M. 2514. They are communicated in a plain and perspicuous style: the precepts are fully and circumstantially given; and their minute particulars are often repeated,

anger against the Egyptians. There were three orders in the Hebrew priesthood: the Priests, the Levites, and the Nethinims. The Levites instructed the people, were employed in taking care of the tabernacle, and afterwards of the temple and the sacred books; they were likewise joined with the priests in deciding on cases of leprosy, and in judging ceremonial causes: they had not any appropriate portion or inheritance, but subsisted by the altar, scattered among the rest of the tribes, agreeably to the prediction of Jacob. Vid. Gen. xlix. 7. The Nethinims were descendants of the Gibeonites, condemned by Joshua for their deceit, to menial and servile attendance on the Priests. Vid. Joshua ix. They were called Nethinims, from נתן, Nathan, to give; as given to the service of the temple.

⁴ ויקרא, and he called.

⁵ 2 Chron. xxx. 16. Jerem. vii. 22, 23. ix. 16. Ezek. xx. 11. See farther Matt. viii. 4. John viii. 5. compare with ch. xiv. 2. and xx. 10. Rom. x. 5. xiii. 9. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Gal. iii. 12. 1 Pet. i. 16, and Baruch ii. 29.

and insisted on as important, and expressive of something beyond the mere letter.

That the Levitical law had a covert and mysterious signification is, indeed, justly allowed by all judicious commentators; the whole service had a spiritual meaning; and its institutions, ordinances, and ceremonies were unquestionably prefigurative of gospel appointments⁶. Thus its sacrifices and oblations, which, if performed in faith and obedience, were to conciliate forgiveness of sins⁷, have been justly considered as significant of the atonement to be made by Christ. The requisite qualities of these sacrifices were emblematical of Christ's immaculate character. The mode also prescribed as necessary in the form of these offerings, and the mystical rites ordained, were allusive institutions calculated to enlighten the apprehensions of the Jews, and to prepare them for the reception of the gospel⁸. Thus likewise, as might have been observed in the account of the preceding book, the ark of the covenant, the structure of the tabernacle, the priesthood, and its decorations, were all apposite emblems of correspondent circumstances, appropriate to a scheme of more perfect description⁹. So also in a less impor-

⁶ John xix. 36. comp. with Exod. xii. 4. Numb. ix. 12. Heb. ix. x.

⁷ Ezek. xx. 11. Rom. x. 5. Gal. iii. 12. Shuckford's Con. vol. iii. b. xi. These were to conciliate forgiveness only in virtue of Christ's sacrifice, and on the conditions of faith in God's promises, and of obedience to his laws. The Jews understood the conditions, however they might be ignorant of the nature of Christ's meritorious atonement, and however they might have been at length misled to attribute to their legal sacrifices a real efficacy, and power of effecting reconciliation and pardon in a future life.

⁸ Heb. xiii. 11, 12. The Israelites must have had at least some indistinct idea of this spiritual reference. Vid. 1 Cor. x. 1—4.

⁹ Heb. viii. 5. ix. 8, 9.

tant sense were the outward rites and purgations enjoined by the Mosaic law, designed to intimate the necessity of inward purity¹. The whole service, therefore, like the veil on the face of Moses, concealed a spiritual radiance under an outward covering; and the internal import bearing a precise and indisputable reference to future circumstances and events, is stamped with the indelible proofs of Divine contrivance².

These ideas, however, though just, must not be overstrained, since the fancy, if unreined, is apt to run into excess: and the interpretation of the ritual law has been, perhaps, too uncontrolled, particularly by its earlier expositors, who have sometimes built their explanations more on fanciful allusion, than on real analogy, and true connexion³. It may be remarked also, that some of these ceremonial laws seem to have been imposed as a punishment, on account of the frequent transgressions of a rebellious people⁴; or rather as a yoke or curb to restrain them from idolatry⁵, as well as to discriminate them from all other nations; (which purpose they effectually served in all their dispersions and captivities;) and to interest their affections in favour of a religion, the practice of which was interwoven with the whole conduct of their life⁶. The sanctimonious observances, likewise, and the frequent

¹ Numb. xix. 13. 19. Deut. x. 16. xxx. 6. Heb. x. 22. xii. 24. 1 Pet. i. 2. Rom. ii. 28, 29. 1 Cor. vii. 19.

² Exod. xxxiv. 33. 2 Cor. iii. 13.

³ Hesychii Comment.

⁴ Gal. iii. 19. 1 Tim. i. 8—10. Irenæ. Hæres. lib. iv. c. xxviii. Lactant. de Vera Sapient. lib. iv. c. x. p. 264. Biblioth. Patrum, tom. i. Spencer de Legib. Hebræ. lib. i. c. iv. p. 41.

⁵ Lowman's Hebrew Worship, &c. Vid. ch. xix. 26. 28. Spencer de Leg. lib. ii. Ezek. xx. 24, 25.

⁶ Juvenal, Sat. xiv. l. 103. 104. Tacit. Hist. lib. v. § 5. Grot.

purifications and regard to dress, enjoined by the Levitical law, were designed to keep up a reverential awe of the Divine majesty, which was supposed personally to reside among this favoured people; and to impress them with a conviction of the inward holiness which was requisite to qualify them to approach God's presence.

The distinctions between clean and unclean beasts, were founded on an accurate and comprehensive knowledge of their characteristic properties, though often intended to be burthensome⁷. They were also particularly designed to separate this sanctified people from defilement and social intercourse with idolaters⁸. The regulations, likewise, concerning leprosy and impurities, deliberately or casually contracted, were minutely and forcibly enacted, in order to inculcate into the minds of the Israelites their peculiar appropriation to God's service⁹. The multiplied ceremonies, however, and complicated rites which were established in consequence of these designs, were certainly so numerous, and in some instances so embarrassing, that nothing but a conviction of their Divine origin could have influenced any people to receive them; especially as the wisdom of their spiritual import was not understood at first, but only gradually unfolded by the interpreta-

de Jur. Bell. lib. ii. 15. 9. p. 272, edit. Amstel. 1670. Chrysost. Hom. in Gen. xxxix. p. 401. tom. iv. edit. Paris, 1721.

⁷ Acts xv. 10.

⁸ Lev. xi. 44, 45. xx. 25, 26. Exod. xxxii. 31. Deut. xiv. 2, 3. 21. Spencer de Legibus Hebræor. lib. i. c. 7. p. 321. Davenant in Epist. ad Coloss. ii. 17. p. 230. Edit. Cantab. 1639. Luke xix. 7. Acts x. 28. xi. 3.

⁹ Levit. xx. 25, 26.

tions of the prophets. But the ceremonial law, though in fact "a yoke too heavy to be borne," and completely obeyed, was, nevertheless, well¹ adapted to the time and the circumstances under which it was delivered, and to the dull and perverse nation for which it was designed². It did not divert the mind to objects of mistaken worship, but led it up to a reverence for God. It was, likewise, perfect as to its spiritual intention and final views, as a figurative and temporary dispensation. The transient³ character of its ceremonies was not explained at first, lest they should be undervalued; but as soon as this religious system was established, its true nature began to appear to the people. The inspired teachers instructed them, that sacrifices and oblations for sin were figurative atonements of little value in the eyes of God, if unaccompanied by that faith and by those qualifications which he required⁴; and that, in like manner, the outward purifications and observances commanded by the Mosaic law, were designed to illustrate the importance of internal righteousness⁵.

The sacrifices, as well eucharistical as expiatory, of which the regulations are prescribed in this book, were

¹ Acts xv. 10. Gal. v. 1.

² Deut. xxxii. 28. Jerem. iv. 22. Barrow's 15th Sermon on the imperfection of the Jewish Religion, p. 205. vol. ii. Lond. 1686. Matt. xix. 8.

³ Psalm xix 7—11. Psalm cxix.

⁴ Jerem. vi. 20. vii. 21—23. Isaiah i. 11—17. lviii. 6, 7. lxiii. 1—3. Hosea vi. 6. Micah vi. 6—8. Amos v. 21—24. Psalm l. 8—14. li. 16, 17.

⁵ Psalm l. 8—15. li. 16, 17. 1 Sam. xv. 22. Prov. xv. 8. Hosea vi. 6. Isaiah i. 11—17. lviii. 6, 7. Zech. vii. 5—10. Rom. ii. 28, 29. Vid. also Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. viii. c. 9, 10. p. 171, et lib. viii. c. 10. p. 376.

by no means first instituted by the Mosaic law, but appear to have been adopted, probably by Divine appointment, as the earliest mode of worship; and they were offered up by our first parents as an acceptable acknowledgment of God's attributes, and in becoming profession of human submission and contrite humility⁶. They were established, however, under the Mosaic dispensation, upon their true principles, and commanded with⁷ circumstances that gave them additional importance, and which serve to illustrate their real character and intention. They were ordained as an atonement for the breach of the ritual laws⁸, and delivered the people from those civil and ecclesiastical punishments to which they were exposed from the wrath of God, considered as a political governor. They "sanctified to the purifying of the flesh,"—washed away legal defilements, but were never intended to wipe off the stains of moral guilt, or to avert God's anger against sin, except as figurative of that perfect atonement to be made by Him who was to cause the "sacrifice and the oblation to cease"⁹. They were commemorative acknowledgments of guilt, and typical pledges only of a sufficient sacrifice.

The history of the Israelites advances about one

⁶ Gen. iv. 3, 4. Heb. xi. 4. God may be supposed to have appointed that to which He "had respect," and which He afterwards explicitly commanded. Exod. xx. 24. Rev. xiii. 8.

⁷ Heb. ix. x. 1—14.

⁸ Falsehood, fraud, and violence, though offences against the moral law, might be atoned for by a trespass-offering to God as a civil ruler, but only on condition of that ample reparation to the injured party, which evinced a sincerity of repentance. Lev. vi. 1—7.

⁹ Psalm xl. 6, 7. Dan. ix. 27. Heb. vii. 19. ix. 9.

month in this book, which, like the rest, blends instruction and narration in one interesting account. It describes the consecration of Aaron and his sons; the daring impiety and instant punishment of Nadab and Abihu; and the stoning of the blasphemer; particulars which illustrate God's care for religion, and the jealous severity by which he kept up among the Israelites a reverence for his name. The relation also is animated with some signal predictions that stamp the work with additional marks of inspiration. Moses revealed to the people their future dispersion among the heathen nations; their distress, decline, and desolation; and yet consoled them with the promise of mercy to be mingled with punishment, in their miraculous preservation¹. The book contains, likewise, one most remarkable prophecy², the accomplishment of which was a standing miracle among the Israelites, and which for many ages continued to present an assurance of the divine authority and inspiration of Moses. He here foretold that every sixth year should produce superfluous plenty to supply the deficiencies of the seventh, or sabbatical year, when the land was to remain "unsown, and the vineyards unpruned³;" and this effectually came to pass: the observance of the law being invariably provided for, while it continued to be revered. The same assurance was likewise given of a spontaneous supply to remedy the inconveniences which would otherwise have resulted from that neglect of

¹ Chap. xxvi. The whole of which is a collection of prophetic promises and threats, that were strikingly fulfilled. See particularly verse 22. compare with 1 Kings xiii. 24; 2 Kings ii. 24.

² Chap. xxv. 20—22.

³ Chap. xxv. 2—9.

cultivation of the land which was enjoined for every 49th or 50th year⁴; and to this was annexed a threat, that the land should be brought into desolation, and the people be scattered among the heathen, there to remain for as long a time as they should have neglected the laws of the sabbath and jubilee⁵: a prophecy remarkably accomplished in the seventy years' captivity of Babylon.

⁴ Chap. xxv. 8—12. 20—23. The Jubilee year either coincided with the seventh sabbatical year, or was provided for by additional abundance in the 48th year. Vid. Cunæus de Republica Heb. c. vi. p. 824. Criticor. Sacr. tom. viii. Lond. 1660. Joseph. Antiq. lib. iii. cap. xii. p. 128. Edit. Hud. J. Scaliger de Emend. Temp. lib. v.

⁵ Levit. xxvi. 34, 35. If we suppose these laws to have been neglected from the beginning of the reign of Saul, A. M. 2909, to the fourth year of Jehoiakim, A. M. 3398, which is probably the true period, the seventy years' captivity will exactly allow time for the completion of the rest, proportionate to the space of 490 years, during which the laws were violated. It is remarkable that the Jews were carried away captive towards the conclusion of the sabbatical year. Vid. Maimon. Schemitta ve Jobel. cap. x. § 3.

OF THE
BOOK OF NUMBERS.

THIS Book is called the Book of Numbers, because it contains an account of the numbering or mustering of the people ; or rather, indeed, of two numberings : the first in the beginning of the second year after their departure from Egypt : the second in the plains of Moab, towards the conclusion of their journey in the wilderness ¹. The Jews entitle the book ², Vaie-dab-bēr, which in the Hebrew is the initial word ; and which some (conceiving it to imply a voice from the mercy-seat) have supposed to intimate that the manifestations of the Divine will, therein described, were imparted from the holy oracle, which the Jews distinguished by the name of the word of Jehovah ; and some passages from the book might be produced in support of this opinion ³. However this may be, it is certain that Moses was the inspired author of the book, and that he delivers in it nothing but what is consistent with truth, and agreeable to the Divine will, since it constitutes part of the Pentateuch, which in all ages has been universally ascribed to Moses, and it is

¹ Chap. xxvi.

² וידבר, And he spake.

³ Chap. vii. 89.

cited as his inspired work in various parts of Scripture ⁴.

The book comprehends a period of about 38 years, reckoning from the first day of the second month after the deliverance from Egypt, during which time the Israelites continued to wander in the wilderness ⁵. Most of the transactions, however, described therein, happened in the first and last of these years. The date of those events which are recorded in the middle of the book cannot be precisely ascertained.

The history presents us with an account of the consecration of the Tabernacle, and of the offering of the princes at its dedication. It describes the journeys and encampments of Israel under the miraculous guidance of the cloud; the punishment at Tabera; and the signal vengeance with which, on several occasions, God resented the distrustful murmurs of the people, and that rebellious spirit which so often broke out in sedition against his appointed ministers, particularly in the affair of Korah, which is described with great animation; and the memorial of which was long preserved in the broad plates which were made of the censers of the rebellious men for a covering of the altar ⁶. The promptitude and severity with which God enforced a respect for his laws, even to the exemplary condemnation of the man who profaned the Sabbath,

⁴ Joshua iv. 12. 2 Chron. xxix. 11. xxxi. 3. Ezek. xx. 13. xlv. 26, 27. Matt. xii. 5. John vi. 31. xix. 36. Christ himself alludes to this book. Comp. xxi. 9. with John iii. 14.

⁵ The Israelites were condemned to wander so long in the wilderness for their ungrateful murmurs and distrust in God. Vid. Numb. xiv. 23. 33. But by this segregation many important purposes were accomplished.

⁶ Chap. xvi. 36—40.

were necessary, when a sense of the immediate presence of the Almighty, and a consideration of miracles daily performed, could not influence to obedience. Amidst the terrors, however, of the divine judgments which the book unfolds, we perceive likewise the continuance of God's mercies in providing assistance for Moses by the appointment of the seventy elders; in drawing water from the rock; and in the setting up of the brazen serpent. The benevolent zeal of Moses to intercede on all occasions for the people, even when punished for ungrateful insurrections against himself, deserves likewise to be considered. The offices and proceedings of different persons and families are described with a minuteness of specification, which could result only from truth⁷. The history is animated with much variety of event; and besides the particulars above alluded to, it contains an account of the resignation and death of Aaron; of the conquest of Sihon and Og; of the remarkable conduct of Balaam⁸, towards Balak⁹; of the merited fate of Balaam; of the in-

⁷ See Numbers iii. 4. also ix. 13.

⁸ Balaam was probably a true prophet, who had been seduced by mercenary motives into idolatrous practices, having had recourse to heathen enchantments, when he could not procure revelations from God. Vid. Numb. xxii. 8. xxiv. 1. 2 Peter ii. 15. He resided at Pethor, a city of Mesopotamia, towards the banks of the Euphrates. Pethor was afterwards called Bozor by the Syrians. Hence in 2 Pet. ii. 15. *Βαλαὰμ τοῦ Βοσόρ*, "Balaam of the city of Bosor." Vid. Grotius in loc.

⁹ God's anger appears to have been kindled against Balaam as well for his general practice of divination, as for his desire to procure "the wages of unrighteousness," by cursing those whom God had blessed. Maimonides absurdly represents the speaking of Balaam's ass as a circumstance executed only in vision, though there is no

sidious project to seduce the Israelites ; its success and effects ; and of the appointment of Joshua. We perceive in every relation the consistency of the divine intentions, and the propriety of the laws which God established. When we contemplate, for instance, the flagrant wickedness practised by idolatrous nations, we cannot wonder at the rigorous commands¹ delivered for the extirpation of the inhabitants of Canaan, and the punishment of those who gave way to the seduction of strange worship² ; or that the Almighty should desire to purge from pollution a land which was to be consecrated to his service. The book contains likewise a repetition of many principal laws given for the direction of the Israelites, with the addition of several precepts, civil and religious. It describes some regulations established for the ordering of the tribes, and for the division of the land which the Israelites were about to possess. It should seem, that the direction was given to distribute the land by lot, in order that the completion of the divine promises expressed by Jacob and others, with respect to the several tribes, might be fully shown to have resulted from the arbitration and control of Providence³. The book presents us also with a list of the tribes ; with that of Levi in particu-

shadow of reason why it should not be considered as the account of a real event. Objections to miracles drawn from their difficulty are preposterous when applied to an omnipotent Being ; and that Moses should not stop to describe the surprise of Balaam, was as consistent with the gravity, as with the conciseness of his history. 2 Pet. ii. 15. and Jos. Antiq. lib. iv. c. 6. Vid. Maim. More Nevoch. part ii. c. xlii. p. 310.

¹ Deut. xii. 1—6. xiii. 12—17. xx. 10—18.

² Chap. iii. 4. See also Leviticus xx. 1—5.

³ Chap. xxvi. 55. compare with Gen. xlix.

lar, which is reserved for a distinct roll, because in possession of an order in the priesthood.

With respect to the numberings which are made in this book, it must be observed first, that the tribes are not reckoned in the order in which their leaders were born, but in that of their respective mothers, or according to their accidental or acquired precedence. 2dly. That only those males who were twenty years old and upwards are reckoned. And 3dly. That Ephraim⁴ and Manasseh are mentioned as two distinct tribes; but for the particular reasons of every arrangement in the order and circumstances of this enumeration, we must have recourse to the commentators at large. From these an ample solution of the difficulties which occur in considering the particulars of the numberings may be obtained⁵.

The most signal prophecies which are contained in this book, and bear testimony to its inspiration, are the blessings which Balaam⁶ was constrained to utter concerning the future prosperity of the Israelites⁷, and the destruction of their several enemies⁸; espe-

⁴ In the number of the tribe of Ephraim compared with that of Manasseh, we perceive the accomplishment of Jacob's prophecy. Comp. Numb. i. 33—35. with Gen. xlviii. 19, 20. Comp. also for similar illustration, Numb. i. 21. with Gen. xlix. 3, 4. and Numb. i. 27. with Gen. xlix. 8.

⁵ Hieron. Com. Parker's Introd. to Numb. Lewis's Antiq. Heb. Repub. lib. viii.

⁶ Though God had probably rejected Balaam as an apostate prophet, He designed to employ him on this signal occasion as the herald of the divine oracles: to illustrate the impotency of the heathen arts, and to demonstrate the power and foreknowledge of the divine Spirit.

⁷ Chap. xxiii. 8—10. 23. xxiv. 8.

⁸ Chap. xxiv.

cially in that distinct and extatic description of the “Star which should come out of Jacob, and of the Sceptre that should rise out of Israel⁹.” The denunciation likewise against Moses and Aaron for their disbelief¹, as well as the threats against the people for their murmurs², and the declaration, that none but Caleb and Joshua should enter the land, were strikingly fulfilled; it may be added, that the rites of the Pass-over, of which the observance is again enjoined in this book³, were figurative representations of a predictive character.

⁹ Chap. xxiv. 17. 19. The expression of “the Star” might be chosen in allusion to those portentous lights which were supposed to precede the appearance of illustrious personages; and it is remarkable, that, as if in exact conformity with Balaam’s prophecy, “a star in the east” indicated the time and place of our Saviour’s nativity. Vid. Matt. ch. ii. Hence the false Christs that appeared in the earlier ages, and particularly in the time of Trajan, assumed the title of *Bar Chochab*, that is, *the Son of the Star*. Talmud. Bab. Sanhedrim. c. Chelek. et Maimon.

¹ Chap. xx. 8. 12—28. xxvii. 12—14. and Patrick in loc.

² Chap. xiv. 20—36.

³ Chap. ix. 12. comp. with John xix. 36.

OF THE
BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY.

THE fifth and last Book of the Pentateuch is distinguished among the Jews by its initial word¹; though sometimes the Rabbinical writers call it the Book of reprehensions; in allusion to the frequent reproaches which it contains against the Israelites. It is also denominated Thora, which implies the Law; as well as Misna, a copy of the law; a word which corresponds with the title that the Seventy have given it, Deuteronomy² signifying a repetition of the law. It contains indeed a compendious recapitulation of the law; illustrated by many explanatory additions, and enforced by the strongest and most pathetic exhortations to obedience; as well for the more forcible impression on the Israelites in general, as in particular for the benefit of those who being born in the wilderness were not present at the first promulgation of the law³. The variations

¹ אֱלֹהֵי הַדְּבָרִים these words.

² From *δευτερος νόμος*, a second Law.

³ Moses in his address to the Israelites observes, that “the Lord made not the covenant with their fathers, but with those then alive;” for though many who were present at Sinai were now dead, many also must have been still living; those only having perished in con-

which it exhibits are such as resulted from a change of circumstances when the people were about to enter the promised land. It is a kind of manual of divine wisdom ; a commentary on the decalogue ; and contains such laws as concerned the people in general, as to their civil, military, and religious government, omitting for the most part what related to the Priests and Levites. It was delivered by Moses, a little time previous to his death, to the people whom he had long governed and instructed ; and was bequeathed, with his other writings, to the charge of the Levites⁴, as the most valuable testimony of his regard, in the fortieth year after the departure from Egypt, A.M. 2552.

The book opens with an interesting address to the Israelites, in which Moses briefly recapitulates the many circumstances in which they had experienced the divine favour since their departure from Horeb. He appeals to them as living witnesses of the miracles which God had wrought⁵. He describes the success and victories which had marked their progress ; the discriminating course which they were directed to pursue⁶ ;

sequence of God's threats, who were twenty years old and upwards when they offended Him by their murmurs ; and even of those condemned to die in the wilderness, many might, like Moses, be suffered to behold the land which they were not to enter. Moses, however, may perhaps mean only, that God made not that solemn covenant with their forefathers, the patriarchs, but with the generation of his contemporaries. Vid. Numb. xiv. 29. Deut. v. 3. and Calmet and Estius in loc.

⁴ Chap. xxxi. 26. The two tables of the decalogue were placed in the ark ; the rest of the law in the side of the ark. Vid. 1 Kings viii. 9. Patrick in Deut. xxxi. 26.

⁵ xi. 2, 3, 4.

⁶ Compare Gen. xxxvi. 8. with Deut. ii. 4, 5. and Josh. xxiv. 4.

the incredulous murmurs and ingratitude, by which the people had incensed God ; and the effects of the divine wrath ; especially in the inexorable decree by which he himself had been debarred from that land, for the possession of which he had so earnestly toiled. He proceeds with the most animated zeal to exhort them to future obedience ; and to rehearse in a discourse, renewed at intervals, the various commandments, statutes, and judgments, which had been delivered to them by God, that they might become “ a wise and understanding nation ;” and fulfil the terms of that covenant which the Lord had made with them in Horeb. He speaks with full assurance of the conquest of Judæa, which he was not to enter⁷, and of the establishment and future protection and victories of the people⁸. This is often done with a disregard of human means of defence⁹, and with a consideration for individuals¹ which argued a reliance on the divine aid. Moses while he intersperses with these laws frequent reproaches for their past misconduct, unfolds the glorious attributes of God², and reiterates every persuasive motive to obedience. He commands them to distinguish their first entrance to Canaan, by a public display of reverence for God’s law : by erecting stones on which all its words and precepts might be inscribed³. He enters into a new covenant with the people ; which not only included that previously made at Horeb, but which re-

⁷ Deut. xxxii. 51. Joshua iii. 2.

⁸ Chap. ix. 1—6.

⁹ Chap. xvii. 4. 20.

¹ Chap. xx. 5—8.

² Chap. ix. 1—6.

³ Chap. xxvii. 1—5. Moses expressly commands, that “ all the words of the law” should be written, which cannot mean, as some have supposed, merely the decalogue.

newed also and ratified those assurances of spiritual blessings, long before imparted to Abraham and his descendants⁴. He then, in consistency with the promises and sanctions of both covenants, sets forth for their election, "life and good, and death and evil:" temporal and eternal recompence, or present and future punishment⁵.

In the preceding books of the Pentateuch, Moses speaks of himself in the third person, but here in a more animated manner, he drops as it were the character of an historian, and is introduced as immediately addressing himself to his countrymen⁶. Hence it is, that in describing what he had uttered, he repeats the decalogue with some slight change of expression from that which was used at its first delivery; a variation which, as it affected not the import of the commandment, might have served to indicate, that not the letter, but the spirit of the law should be regarded: he likewise introduces some general alterations in the code that he presents, which should be considered as supplementary additions required by a change of time and circumstances; and he takes occasion to intimate that spiritual intention of the law, which was designed for the inward government of man⁷. It

⁴ Chap. xxix. 12, 13. Bishop Bull seems to have thought that this covenant was different from that made at Sinai; and that it contained a renewal of the covenant made with Abraham. Bull's Harmon. Apost. Disser. Poster. c. xi. p. 77. Edit. Lond.

⁵ Maimonides, conscious that the Mosaic promises of temporal reward were figurative of future recompence, gives this traditional explanation of the sanction in Deut. iv. 40. *Ut bene sit tibi* "in sæculo quod totum est bonum." *Et prolonges dies* "in sæculum quod totum est longum."

⁶ Chap. i. 6. ii. 17. iv. 8. ix. 13. x. 3.

⁷ Chap. x. 16.

should be here remarked, that the severe spirit which pervades the law, as shown in the numerous exactions and declaratory curses⁸, detailed in this book, was consistently contrived to point out the rigorous character of the divine justice, which, in a covenant of stipulated observances, necessarily called for punctilious and uniform obedience⁹, and punished a transgression of the legislator by exclusion from Canaan. For though the divine mercy might have compassionated the weakness of human nature, and, therefore, prescribed atonements not difficult to be paid; yet God could not, in conformity with his relation to the Israelites, (if we may presume so to express ourselves,) over-look even involuntary deficiencies or casual defilement. A similar spirit of stern equity appeared as to the civil regulations of society; and the law not only suffered, but required an exact retaliation: "Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth¹." A requisition which, while it strongly enforced God's abhorrence of injuries, was not likely to be abused under a government which provided cities of refuge for undesigning offenders, and administered its judgments upon principles universally known and accepted.

⁸ Chap. xxvii.

⁹ Deut. xxvii. 26. The law rigorously enforced the observance of whatever it enjoined, though many precepts were framed with somewhat of lax and indulgent consideration of what the perverse temper of the Israelites would bear; thus as they had been long accustomed to divorces, it was judged right, rather to restrict by deliberate regulations, than entirely to abolish them, which might have occasioned bad consequences. Vid. Deut. xxiv. 1—4. Matt. v. 31. xix. 7. Selden, *Uxor. Heb. lib.* 3. ch. 24. p. 796. The laws with respect to paternal authority were rather injunctions to control the unbounded power which parents, among other nations, did possess over their children, than to invest them with new rights.

¹ Vide ch. xix. 21.

The book contains a period of nearly two months: a history of the conclusion of the life of Moses, whose last days were distinguished by increasing solicitude, and the most active exertions for the welfare of his people. After a commemorative hymn², in which he pathetically exhorts them "to consider their latter end;" and after having uttered his prophetic blessings, delivered with wonderful intuition of futurity, in solemn and appropriate promises to the several tribes; this great man is represented to have retired, by divine command, to the top of Mount Nebo; from whence he had a prospect of Canaan, and foresaw the speedy accomplishment of God's promises. He then, in the full possession of his powers and faculties, "when his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated," died in the 120th year of his age.

The mention of Dan³ in the first verse of the last chapter of this book, as well as the account of the death and burial of Moses, and some other seemingly posthu-

² The fine attestation to the praise of God which is contained in the 4th verse of this hymn, is prefixed as a beginning to the prayer which the Jews repeat at the burial of their dead, and which they call *Tzidduck haddin*, that is, "just judgment." Vid. Patrick in Deut. xxxii. 4.

³ It has been asserted, that some names used in the Pentateuch were not applied to the places which they described till after the events mentioned, nor even till after the death of Moses, and that some observations seem adapted to a later period. If the truth of this assertion could be proved, we might suppose the modern names to be substituted by Ezra, or some prophet posterior to Moses, for the information of later times; but the assertion often proceeds from mistake, or from want of distinction. For instance, the Dan spoken of by Moses, Gen. xiv. 14. Deut. xxxiv. 1. might be different from the place so named in Judges xviii. 29. Josephus represents it to have been near one of the sources of the Jordan. Antiq. lib. i. c. 10.

mous particulars therein described⁴, have been produced to prove that this chapter could not be written by Moses; and in all probability these circumstances were inserted by Joshua, to complete the history of this illustrious prophet; or by Samuel, or some prophet who succeeded him. They were admitted by Ezra as authentic, and we have no reason to question the fidelity of the account.

The book is cited as the book of Moses in many parts of Scripture⁵; and numberless passages are produced from its testimony, by Christ and his Apostles⁶. It deserves also to be particularly considered, that our blessed Saviour, when under temptation, employed in three several instances nearly or exactly the words of this book, as of inspired authority, to repel the seductions of Satan⁷.

With respect to the prophetic part of Deuteronomy, it should be remarked, that the Messiah is here more explicitly foretold than in the preceding books, and

⁴ There has been a frivolous cavil on the first verse of this book, where Moses is said to have written "on this side," which the Seventy render "beyond Jordan." The word בעבר applies to either side with relation to the speaker. Vid. Jos. xii. 1—7. 1 Sam. xiv. 20. Huet. Demon. Evang. Prop. iv. c. 14. sect. 19, p. 145. Witsius Miscel. Sac. lib. i. c. 14. Philo de Vit. Mos. lib. iii. Josephus, who omits some particulars of the account, supposes Moses to have written the statement of his own death by anticipation, with design to prevent his countrymen from any presumptuous assertion that he was, on account of the greatness of his virtue, translated to God. Antiq. lib. iv. c. 48, page 176.

⁵ Josh. i. 5—7. 1 Kings ii. 3. 2 Chron. xxv. 4. Dan. ix. 13, &c.

⁶ Matt. iv. 4. xv. 4. John i. 45. Acts iii. 22. Gal. iii. 13.

⁷ Matt. iv. 4. 7. 10, compare with viii. 3. vi. 16. 13.

described as the completion of the Jewish œconomy. "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him ⁸."

The prophecies of Moses increase in number and clearness towards the close of his writings. As he approached the end of his life, he appears to have discerned futurity with more exactness. His foreknowledge of the change from a theocracy to a regal government⁹; his description of the apostacy and corruption of the people¹; his denunciations of their consequent punishments; their success and deliverances²; dispersions and desolations³; the gradual extermination of the people of the land⁴, which were to be accomplished by events beyond the control of human power; his prophetic blessings on the tribes⁵; his revelation as to the captivities and idolatry of the people and their king⁶; his representation of the rapid victories of the Romans⁷; his detail of the miseries to be sustained by

⁸ Deut. xviii. 15, compare with John i. 45. vi. 14. Acts iii. 22. vii. 37. See also a law which has a prophetic allusion to Christ, chap. xxi. 22, 23, compare with Gal. iii. 13. John v. 46.

⁹ Chap. xvii. 14, 15.

¹ Chap. xxxi. 27—29.

² Chap. xxx. 1—6, compare with Nehem. i. 8, 9.

³ Chap. iv. 25—30. vii. 20. xi. 23—29. xxviii. xxx. xxxi. 2, 3—8. xxxii. and xxxiii. and Joshua xxiv. 12.

⁴ Chap. vii. 22.

⁵ Chap. xxxiii.

⁶ Chap. xxviii. 36, compare with 2 Kings xxiv. 15. xxv. 7. Jerem. xxxix. 7. lii. 11.

⁷ Chap. xxviii. 49—52. The Romans are portrayed under the description of an eagle, in allusion to the image with which their standard was decorated. It is remarkable also, that the enemy was to come "from the end of the earth;" and Vespasian, in fact, came from Britain against Jerusalem.

his besieged countrymen⁸; and particularly his prophecies relative to their present conduct and condition, as accomplished under our own observation⁹, bear striking evidence to the truth and inspiration of his writings, and fearfully illustrate the character of the divine attributes.

The code of laws which he consecrated was favourable to civil freedom, and provided for the just rights of the subject. The sovereigns, who it was foreseen would be appointed, were instructed not to oppress the people, but to keep the law and the statutes, and to write a copy of the law in a book out of that which should be in the custody of the Levites¹.

The book of Deuteronomy brings down the sacred history to A.M. 2552, and completes the volume of the Pentateuch, of which every part is uniformly and consistently perfect.

⁸ Chap. xxviii. 52—58, comp. with Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. v. vi. see also Antiq. lib. xv. c. 9.

⁹ Chap. xxviii. in which a chain of illustrious prophecies is delivered in one complicated denunciation, and various calamities are blended under one point of view. Vid. Newton on the Prophecies, 7th Dissert.

¹ Deut. xvii. 18—20.

GENERAL PREFACE

TO THE

HISTORICAL BOOKS.

THE historical books of Scripture were written by persons who composed them under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Some of them are designated by the names of distinguished prophets; and the rest are universally attributed to writers invested with the same character. The Hebrew annals were kept only by privileged and appointed persons¹, and the writers, who are occasionally mentioned in Scripture as the penmen of the sacred history, are expressly denominated prophets or seers². It is evident, likewise, that the authors of the historical, as well as of the prophetic books, must have been inspired, since they every where display an acquaintance with the counsels and designs of God, develope the secret springs and recondite wisdom of his government, and reveal his future mercies and judgments in the clearest predictions. They uniformly adhere to the most excellent instruction, illustrate the perfection of God's attributes, and exemplify the tendency of his precepts. They invariably maintain

¹ Vid. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. § 7. p. 1333.

² 1 Sam. xxii. 5. 1 Kings xvi. 1. 7. 1 Chron. xxix. 29. 2 Chron. xii. 15. xx. 34. xxvi. 22. xxxii. 32. Jerem. xxviii. 7.

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² 1 Sam. xxii. 5. 1 Kings xvi. 1. 7. 1 Chron. xxix. 29. 2 Chron. xii. 15. xx. 34. xxvi. 22. xxxii. 32. Jerem. xxviii. 7.

a strict sincerity of intention; and in their description of character and event, exhibit an unexampled impartiality. Their writings were received as sacred into the Hebrew canon, and in Ezra's collection they were arranged under the class of prophetical books. The books of Joshua, of Judges, (including Ruth,) of Samuel, and of Kings, were called the books of the former prophets³; and considered as the production not only of enlightened men of unimpeached veracity, exalted character, and disinterested views; but of persons who were occasionally favoured with precise revelations; who unquestionably wrote under a divine impulse, and were employed to register the judgments and designs of God; and as such, indeed, they are cited by the evangelical writers.

It is clear, from all these considerations, that the sacred historians wrote under the influence of the Holy Ghost; which, though it did not disclose to them by immediate revelation those things that might be collected from the common sources of intelligence, undoubtedly directed them in the selection of their materials; and enlightened them to judge of the truth and importance of those accounts from which they borrowed their information. The historical books appear, indeed, to have been generally written by authors contemporary with those periods to which they severally relate; and hence they often describe such particulars as the prophets themselves had witnessed; and contain such minute and accurate descriptions, as none but authors coeval with the events could have furnished. Some of them, however, were compiled in subsequent

³ Those of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets, being styled the Books of the later Prophets.

times; and then they may be supposed to have been in part collected from those authentic documents that were known and esteemed by their countrymen; and to have been enlarged with such additional particulars as must have been derived from divine communications imparted to themselves or others. These books are to be considered, indeed, as the histories of revelations; as commentaries on the prophecies, and as affording a lively sketch of the economy of God's government of his selected people. They were not designed as national annals, to record every minute particular and political event that occurred; but they afford rather a compendious selection of such remarkable occurrences as were best calculated to illustrate the religion of the Hebrew nation; to set before that perverse and ungrateful people, an abstract of God's proceedings, and of their interests and duties; and also to transmit to posterity an instructive memorial of God's judgments, to hold up a model of that dispensation on which a nobler and more spiritual government was to be erected. It is, indeed, evident that some more diffusive and circumstantial records were sometimes kept by the priests, or other publicly-appointed persons⁴; for to such records the sacred writers occasionally allude, as bearing testimony to their accounts; or refer to them for a more minute detail of those particulars which

⁴ Josephus speaks of genealogical registers as distinct from the twenty-two canonical books; and observes, that they contained the names of the Hebrew priests for a succession of 2000 years. He mentions, also, other accounts from the reign of Artaxerxes, which were not deemed of the same authority, as there was not then any regular succession of the priests. *Cont. Apion. lib. i. § 7, 8. p. 1333.*

they omit, as inconsistent with their designs. These, however, not being composed by inspired writers, were not admitted into the sacred canon; and though Josephus informs us that the priests were accustomed, after every war, carefully to correct and to reform their registers⁵: and the author of the second book of Maccabees mentions, that Judas Maccabeus gathered together “those things that were lost by reason of the war⁶,” yet, after the abolition of the Jewish priesthood, and the many calamities, persecutions, and dispersions which this whole nation has suffered, we need not wonder that these voluminous writings have perished; and indeed it required the especial protection of Providence, as well as that reverential regard which the Jews entertained for the sacred books, to preserve their canon from destruction or injury. We have, however, the less reason to regret the loss of other Jewish writings, since the Scriptures present us with the scheme of prophecy, and with the account of that peculiar economy by which the Jews were distinguished from all other nations.

The historical books of Scripture, if considered distinctly from the Pentateuch, and the writings more particularly styled prophetical, contain a compendium of the Jewish history from the death of Moses, A.M. 2553, to the reformation established by Nehemiah after the return from the captivity, A.M. 3595. After the death of Moses, Joshua continued to record those miraculous particulars which demonstrated the divine interposition

⁵ The keepers of these genealogies are sometimes called Maschirim, Recorders or Memorialists. 2 Sam. viii. 16. 2 Kings xviii. 18. 1 Chron. xviii. 15. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 8. 1 Macc. xiv. 23. 2 Macc. ii. 1.

⁶ 2 Macc. ii. 14.

in favour of the Israelites, and to commemorate the events that preceded and accomplished their settlement in the land of Canaan. The eventful period which succeeded the death of Joshua, during which the Hebrews were subjected to the government of the Judges, as ministers of the theocracy, opened a large scope for the industry of the sacred historians. Samuel, or some other prophet, appears to have selected such particulars as were best calculated to describe the period; and to have digested them into the Book of Judges; having doubtless procured much information from the records of the Priests or Judges, some of whom were inspired, though prophetic revelations were "scarce in those days⁷;" and divine communications were made by means of the Urim and Thummim⁸. From the time

⁷ 1 Sam. iii. 1.

⁸ Exod. xxviii. 30. Levit. viii. 8. Numb. xxvii. 21. The Urim and Thummim, which words signify light and perfection, are applied to a miraculous ornament worn on the breast-plate of the high-priest, and are supposed by some to be descriptive of the twelve jewels in the breast-plate, which were engraven with the names of the tribes of Israel; but which perhaps meant something distinct from these. Compare Exod. xxxix. 10, with Levit. viii. 8. Some imagine that they were oracular figures that gave articulate answers; others, that they implied only a plate of gold, engraven with the Tetragrammaton, or sacred name of Jehovah. Whatever the ornament was, it enabled the high-priest to collect divine instruction upon occasions of national importance. Some conceive that the intelligence was imparted by an extraordinary protrusion or splendour of the different letters. But others, with more reason, think that the Urim and Thummim only qualified the priest to present himself in the holy place, to receive answers from the mercy-seat in the tabernacle; and in the camp from some other consecrated place whence the divine voice might issue. Vid. Prid. Connect. pt. i. book iii. p. 119. Jennings's Jewish Antiq. book i. c. v. p.

of Samuel, the Jews seem to have been favoured with a regular succession of prophets, who, in an uninterrupted series, bequeathed to each other, with the mantle of prophecy, the charge of commemorating such important particulars as were consistent with the plan of sacred history; and who, superior to the ostentation of prefixing their names to their several contributions, took up the history where the preceding prophet ceased, without distinguishing their respective portions. It is possible, however, that the books of Kings and of Chronicles do not contain a complete compilation of the entire works of each contemporary prophet; but rather an abridgment of their several labours, digested by Ezra, in or after the captivity, with intention to exhibit the sacred history at one point of view: and hence it is that they contain some expressions which evidently result from contemporary description; and others, that as clearly argue them to have been completed long after the occurrences which they relate. Hence also it is, that though particular periods are more diffusively treated of than others, we still find, throughout, a connected series of events, and in each individual book a general uniformity of style.

The object of the sacred historians was to communicate instruction to mankind, and to illustrate the nature of God's providence in small, as well as in great occurrences—in particular instances, as well as in general appointments; they, therefore, often descend from the great outline of national concerns to the minute detail of private life. The relations, however,

233-7. vol. 1st. London, 1766. Philo-Jud. de Monarch. lib. ii. p. 226. vol. ii. edit. Mangey. Spencer's Urim and Thummim.

of individual events, that are occasionally interspersed, are highly interesting, and given with dramatic effect; while they admirably develope the designs of the Almighty, and the character of those times to which they are respectively assigned. Those seeming digressions, likewise, in which the inspired writers have recorded such remarkable events as related to particular personages, or such occurrences in foreign countries, as tended to affect the interests of the Hebrew nation, are not only valuable for the religious spirit which they breathe, but are to be admired as strictly consistent with the sacred plan. Thus the histories of Job, of Ruth, and of Esther, though apparently extrinsic appendages, are in reality connected parts of one entire fabric; and exhibit, in minute delineation, that wisdom which is elsewhere displayed on a larger scale; as they likewise present an engaging picture of that private virtue, which in an extended influence operated to national prosperity. These books constitute, then, an important part of the sacred volume; which unfolds a complete code of instructive lessons, conveyed under every form, diversified with every style of composition, and enlivened with every illustration of circumstance.

While the twelve tribes were united under one government, their history is represented under one point of view. When a separation took place, the kingdom of Judah, from which tribe the Messiah was to descend, was the chief object of attention with the sacred historians; they, however, occasionally treat of the events that occurred in Samaria, especially when connected with the concerns of Judah: they draw instructive

accounts of the government of Israel, from the separation of the ten tribes to their captivity; and place the circumstances which produced this infliction of punishment in striking colours before the inhabitants of Judah, whose unrighteousness was afterwards punished by a similar fate. Some account of the events which occurred in Samaria, was kept probably by those prophets, who were born, or laboured among the people of that country⁹; and the same persons supplied materials for the sacred authors of the historical books who were prophets of Judah.

The prophets who were mercifully raised up to console the Hebrew nation during the Babylonish captivity, have scattered among their predictions some few lines of contemporary history; but they have not communicated any particular account of the circumstances that distinguished the condition of their countrymen; who, however, must have received every possible mitigation of the severity of their affliction, from the good offices of such among them as conciliated the favour of the Babylonish sovereigns; and from the prophetic assurances which opened to them the prospect of a return to their country.

As the succession of the prophets ceased in Malachi, the volume of the sacred history was closed with the account of the restoration of the Jews, and of their exertions to rebuild their cities, and to re-establish the order and security of their government. The last description represents them settled and reformed by the pious zeal of Nehemiah, and animated by the expect-

⁹ 1 Kings xix. 18. xi. 29. xiv. 2. xvi. 7. 2 Chron. xxviii. 9.

tation of that "greater glory," which should shine in their latter temple, when "the desire of all nations should come¹."

In possession of the complete volume of the Scriptures, the Jews required no further revelations of the Divine will to explain and inculcate the terms of their acceptance. Enabled by the sacred records to look back on the vicissitudes which their nation had experienced, and to contemplate the character of God's judgments in instructive scenes, they needed no longer any living prophet to warn them of that wrath which sin and idolatry would provoke², or to assure them of that recompence which obedience would obtain. The design and character also of the old covenant, its spiritual import, and its figurative contexture, were now unravelled for the instruction of mankind, and no fit subject remained for the employment of inspired writers till the appearance of a new dispensation. Of the period, therefore, that intervened between the death of Malachi and the arrival of that messenger whom he foretold, no sacred account exists³. An awful interval of expectation prevailed before the coming of him who was to appear, on which period but little light is thrown by the occasional accounts of apocryphal and profane historians. The nation, however, seems to have been successively subjected to the Persian, Grecian, Egyptian, and Syrian monarchies, till rescued into liberty by the valour of the Maccabees, in whom the successors of David were re-established on the throne. These continued to flourish with dimi-

¹ Haggai ii. 7. 9.

² Luke xvi. 29. 31.

³ Eusebius attempts not to go beyond Zerubbabel.

accomplishment of prophecy. If with regard to these, or other minute particulars, the sacred books now seem to contain any inconsistencies or errors, they must be attributed to the negligence of copyists, and to the insensible corruptions which naturally arise from frequent transcription, especially in such points. The errors, however, which industrious objection affects to discover, are often imaginary; and it is not probable, even if we could suppose the authors of these books to have been merely human, uninspired writers, that they should have been so little conversant with the history of their country as to be chargeable with the contradictions which modern commentators have pretended to point out; and which, if they had existed, must, as more glaring to their contemporaries whom they addressed, have necessarily destroyed their credit. The truth is, that if we are sometimes perplexed with difficulties, it is in consequence of the want of coeval accounts, and an effect of that obscurity which must be supposed to overshadow periods so long elapsed. The genealogical and chronological differences which are said sometimes to prevail, have arisen not only from the corruptions to which numbers are particularly subject, but from the different scope which the writers took ⁶.

In the detail of lineage, the sacred historians have inserted only illustrious persons, and sometimes added collateral kindred. They occasionally altered names, where variety admitted preference, as was customary among eastern nations; and in chronological accounts

⁶ Le Clerc *Sentimens de quelques Théol.* Theodoret *Præf. in Quest. Lib. Reg.* p. 230. edit. Lutet. Paris. 1642. R. David Kimchi, Michael, &c.

they calculated frequently in round numbers, where accuracy was not of any consequence⁷. They likewise assumed various æras. Thus in Genesis, Moses reckoned only by the ages of the patriarchs. In Exodus he dated from the departure out of Egypt, as did also succeeding prophets; others, who lived in later times, from the building of the temple⁸; from the commencement of the reigns of their several kings⁹; from their captivities and deliverances¹, or other important national events²; and sometimes from the reigns of foreign kings³, whom if they described by names different from those under which they are mentioned in profane history, they did so in accommodation to the titles by which they were known to the Jews. The difficulties which occur on a superficial perusal of the Scriptures chiefly originate in want of attention to these considerations; and those who have not the leisure and industry which are necessary to elucidate such particulars, will do well to collect the obvious instruction which is richly spread through every page of the sacred volume, rather than to engage in speculations of delicate discussion, or to entangle themselves in objections which result from ignorance. The historical, like all other parts of Scripture, have every mark of genuine and unaffected truth. Miraculous events are inseparably blended with occurrences that are indisputable. Many relations are interwoven with accounts of other nations, yet no inconsistencies have been detected. A connected and

⁷ Gen. xv. 13. 1 Kings vi. 1. Usser. Chron. Sac. c. 12.

⁸ 2 Chron. viii. 1.

⁹ As the earlier prophets.

¹ Ezek. i. 2.

² Amos i. 1.

³ Ezra i. 1. Nehem. ii. 1. Esther i. 3. Dan. x. 1. Zechar. i. 1. Haggai i. 1.

dependent chain of history, an uniform and pervading spirit of piety, co-operating in one design, invariably prevail in every page of the sacred books; and the historical unfold the accomplishment of the prophetic parts.

OF THE
BOOK OF JOSHUA.

It has been contended by some writers, that the Book which passes under the name of Joshua in all the copies, was not written by him; but that this title was chosen rather as descriptive of the chief personage of the book, than with design to intimate its author: in the same manner as the books of Esther, of Job, or of Ruth, are so called, because they treat principally concerning the actions of those persons whose names they respectively bear. But if we wave all the arguments that might be drawn from the title, there will still remain sufficient grounds to conclude, that the book, or at least the greater part of it, was written by Joshua himself, agreeably to the general opinion. It is, indeed, expressly said, towards the conclusion of the book, that "Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God¹," which seems to imply, that he subjoined this history to the Pentateuch.

Joshua is represented through the whole work as appointed by God to govern and instruct his people.

¹ 1 Kings xvi. 34. and compare with Joshua vi. 26. ch. xv. 63. compare with 2 Sam. v. 6.

He is likewise described in the book of Ecclesiasticus², under the title of "Jesus the son of Nave," as "the successor of Moses in prophecies;" there is, therefore, ample reason to be convinced, that Joshua was the author of the book, with the exception, perhaps, of a few verses towards the conclusion; the account of his death being added by one of his successors, in like manner as he may have supplied what was necessary to complete the history of Moses. The ancient Talmudists, and the voice of general tradition, attribute the book to Joshua; and it is expressly said in Bava Bathra, that Joshua wrote the book distinguished by his name³; and the eight last verses of the law. It is also added, in the same place, that Eleazar wrote the twenty-ninth verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of Joshua, as Phineas did the thirty-third; and probably all the five last verses were added by Eleazar the high-priest, his son Phineas, or Samuel.

The principal objections made against the assignment of this book to Joshua are, first, that in the thirteenth verse of the tenth chapter, the circumstance of the sun and moon being stayed, is said to be written in the book of Jasher; by which it is meant to insinuate that the book of Joshua is only a compendious history, selected from larger chronicles, in later times. Now to whatever book this reference may be supposed to apply, whether to a previous narrative, or to a song composed on the occasion of the great event here spoken of, it does not follow that Joshua might not be

² Ecclus. xlv. 1.

³ Bava Bathra, cap. i. Spanhem. Hist. Eccl. Vet. Test. Opera, vol. i. p. 335. edit. Lug. Bat. 1701.

the author of a work in which the book of Jasher is quoted; as probably containing a more minute and circumstantial account of this remarkable miracle⁴. Secondly, those expressions which have been brought to prove that the history was written long after the events therein recorded, as that the stones which Joshua set up "are there unto this day⁵," with similar passages, which argue that the relation was some time subsequent to the occurrences described, do in reality only serve to show, what other circumstances confirm, that Joshua wrote the book towards the conclusion of his days; and then, as speaking of the earlier periods of his government, he might consistently use this and similar expressions⁶.

It has been asserted, farther, that some things are noticed in this book which did not happen till after the death of Joshua; as the expedition of the Danites against Leshem⁷; which apparently is related as a subsequent event in the book of Judges. Hence some have attributed the book to Eleazar; some to Samuel; and some to Isaiah, to Ezra, or others; but it is not necessary on this account to deprive Joshua of his title

⁴ Joshua describes this miracle according to the received notions of astronomy. Vid. Calmet. Dissert. sur le Commandement, que Josué fit. Tome 2. p. v. edit. Paris, 1724.

⁵ Chap. iv. 9. Vid. also chap. x. 27. Matth. xxvii. 8.

⁶ The book must have been written by a person at least nearly contemporary with Joshua, since Rahab was living in the author's time. Vid. chap. vi. 25. and v. 1. where the author speaks of himself as present at the passage over Jordan. Observe also chap. viii. 28. xv. 63. xvi. 10. and the circumstantial detail of particulars which argues a contemporary writer. It was composed before the first book of Kings. Compare Joshua xvi. 10. with 1 Kings ix. 16.

⁷ Chap. xix. 47.

to the book; for if the relation in Judges be not the history of a different expedition⁸, we may suppose the recital in this book to be an interpolation made by Ezra, or some prophet posterior to Joshua; and this is the more probable solution of the difficulty, since the verse which records the conquests of the Danites, appears evidently to be such, in order to complete the account of the Danites' possessions. It may be remarked farther, that whatever is said of Othniel and Achsah, in the book of Judges, is only a recapitulation of what happened under Joshua⁹. The land of Cabul mentioned in Joshua, is by Josephus distinguished from that which is spoken of in the book of Kings¹; and "the house of God" in this book, does not imply the temple; which was not built till long after the death of Joshua; but means the Tabernacle and Ark, which did exist in his time. These

⁸ Judges xviii. 27—29. It is possible that the Laish mentioned in Judges was a different place from the Leshem spoken of in Joshua. The accounts, indeed, vary in some circumstances. In Joshua, Leshem itself is said to have been called Dan. In Judges, Laish is represented to have been burnt, and the city which was built in its room was called Dan.

⁹ Chap. xv. 13. 19. and Judges i. 11—15. or the passage might be a subsequent insertion into the book of Joshua.

¹ Chap. xix. 27. and 1 Kings ix. 13. The former a city on the borders of Ptolemais, the latter a district containing several towns. Compare Josephus de Vitâ, vol. ii. p. 925. with Joseph. Antiq. vol. i. lib. viii. c. v. sect. 3. p. 353. edit. Hudson. et Huet. Demon. Evan. Prop. iv. 148. edit. Par. 1679. The notion that places are in this book sometimes distinguished by names not adopted till later times, is, perhaps, often fanciful, since the origin and date of names are extremely uncertain; but where modern names are found, they might have been affixed by those who read, copied, or revised the book.

difficulties being thus removed, we may conclude that Joshua was the author of the book that bears his name. It contains an account of the distribution of property, which must soon have been committed to writing. It was received by Ezra into the canon as inspired, and it is cited as Scripture by many of the sacred writers², and especially as the work of Joshua in the first book of Kings, where his words are said to be the words of God³, and where the accomplishment of a prophecy delivered by him is related.

Joshua, who was the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, was first called Oshea, or Hosea⁴, a name, which, as it signifies Saviour, was well adapted to his character, as typical of our spiritual Saviour. He is also by St. Luke, and by the author of Ecclesiasticus, styled Jesus; a just representative of that Jesus who leads us into a Canaan of endless felicity, through the water of baptism⁵. Joshua was "filled with the spirit of wisdom," and took upon him the government of Israel by command of God⁶; agreeably to the predic-

² 1 Chron. ii. 7. xii. 15. Psal. cxix. 173. Isa. xxviii. 21. Acts vii. 45. Heb. xi. 31. xiii. 5. James ii. 25. 28. Ecclesi. xlv. 4. 1 Macc. ii. 5, 6.

³ 1 Kings xvi. 34. and Joshua vi. 26.

⁴ הושע Oshea a Saviour, יהושע Jehoshua, *he shall save*. Moses appears to have made this change in the name of Joshua, in prophetic confidence of the victories through which he should conduct the people to their establishment in the land of Canaan. It is first mentioned on his appointment to fight with Amalek. Numb. xiii. 16. Exod. xvii. 9. Jennings' Jewish Antiq. book i. cap. i. p. 32. London, 1766.

⁵ Acts vii. 45. Ecclesi. xlv. 1. Heb. iv. 8. Grot. Com. in Matt. i. 21.

⁶ Numb. xxvii. 18—20. Deut. xxxi. 7. 14. xxxiv. 9. Joshua i. 5.

tion of Moses, who had promised that "the Lord should raise up a prophet like unto him as his successor⁷." The piety, courage, and disinterested integrity of Joshua are conspicuously displayed through the whole course of his conduct. Independently of the inspiration which enlightened his mind and writings, he derived divine information sometimes by immediate revelation from God⁸; and sometimes from the sanctuary, and by the mouth of Eleazar the high-priest, the son of Aaron, who having on the breast-plate, and presenting himself before the veil over against the mercy-seat whereon rested the Divine presence⁹, consulted God by the Urim and Thummim; and God answered him by a voice which issued from the mercy-seat. During the life of this excellent chief, the Israelites were preserved in some obedience to God, and flourished under his protection; and we contem-

⁷ Deut. xviii. 15. This prophecy is emphatically and in a more especial sense applicable to Christ, the archetype of the prophets.

⁸ Chap. iii. 7. v. 13—15. It is generally supposed, in conformity with the sentiments of the ancient Hebrew and Christian churches, that the person who, in the instance last referred to, is related to have appeared to Joshua, was God himself, as he is afterwards called the Lord (Jehovah in the Hebrew), ch. vi. 2. and Joshua would not have been suffered to worship, much less required to reverence a created being. Vid. Rev. xxii. 8, 9. It was probably the divine λόγος, the angel of the covenant, who appeared. Euseb. His. lib. i. c. 2. p. 5. edit. Paris, 1628.

⁹ The Schechinah was a visible symbol of the Divine presence, which, after having conducted the Israelites through the wilderness, rested in a glorious cloud between the Cherubims in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple; and hence the divine oracles were delivered. Vide Lowman's Rationale of the Hebrew Ritual, part ii. ch. ii.

plate with satisfaction, the description of a well-governed and successful people.

Joshua, the leader, as well as the historian of the Israelites, represents in lively colours the progress of a nation led on to rapid and great victories by the guidance of the Lord; yet occasionally checked in their career, that they might be convinced of their dependence on God for success, and that it was not "their own arm" which had procured it. He relates, with all the animation of one who was appointed to be an agent in the scenes displayed, the successive miracles that favoured and effected the conquest of the country; and unfolds the exact accomplishment of the prophecies delivered by Jacob and Moses concerning the possession and division of the promised land¹. The line of conduct which he observed, was such as could not have been pursued but in the confidence of Divine aid: as, for instance, on his entrance into the country, which he designed to conquer, he circumcised his people. It is said, indeed, that the Canaanites were "dismayed." This dismay is represented by the sacred historian, as the effect of a preceding miracle, which bears testimony to the reality of the Divine assistance. The punishments inflicted on the idolatrous nations of Canaan, even to excision, may be regarded as judicial, and they do not impeach the Divine justice, any more than do the exterminating accidents, or convulsions in the natural world, such as fires, hurricanes, earthquakes, and other calamities.

In the course of the narrative, Joshua points out the attention paid to the Divine precepts in the circumcision

¹ Gen. xii. 7. xvii. 8. xlix. Exod. xv. 14—17. xxiii. 23. xxxiii. 2. Numb. xxxiv. 2. Deut. i. 7, 8. xxxii. 49.

of the people²; in the setting up of the Tabernacle; and in the appointment of the cities of refuge. The book concludes with the account of the renewal of the covenant; and of the affecting exhortation and death of Joshua, which terminates an interesting history of about thirty years, from A.M. 2553 to A.M. 2589³; the whole of which is animated by the display of God's attributes, and recommended by the noblest sentiments of piety. It is occasionally interspersed with prophecies⁴, and distinguished throughout by every mark of

² The command given to Joshua to circumcise again the children of Israel, was only to renew a rite which had been omitted in the wilderness. "The reproach of Egypt," which was thereby "rolled away," meant possibly the opprobrium incurred by the Egyptians, who might have neglected the rite originally derived from Abraham, or used among themselves for physical causes, in compliance with the requisitions of the uncircumcised Horites that over-ran Egypt, or who, perhaps, might not yet have adopted it. If we understand that the Egyptians upbraided the Israelites for the neglect of circumcision, it will by no means follow, that the latter nation learnt it from the former; but rather that the Egyptians made it a subject of reproach to the Israelites, that they neglected in the wilderness what they professed to consider as a rite of distinction, and the seal of the promises. Vid. Shuckford's Conn. vol. iii. b. xii. and Patrick in Joshua, ch. v. 6—9. Spencer conceives, that the "reproach of Egypt" was the disgrace of the servitude to which they had been subjected, and from which they were now rescued and declared heirs of the privileges of the promised land, by this token of a free people. Vide Spencer de Leg. Heb. lib. i. c. v. sect. 2. edit. Cantab.

³ Including the account of Eleazar's death, who outlived Joshua about five or six years. This computation is likewise grounded on a supposition that Joshua was employed seven years in completing the conquest of the country, and that he survived it about eighteen years. Some do not admit that he governed the people so long. Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. v. c. i.

⁴ Chap. iii. 10—17. see also vi. 26. compared with 1 Kings xvi. 34. Josh. xvii. 18. xxiii. 13—16.

fidelity and truth. Joshua, like his predecessor, describes the disobedience and transgressions of the Jews, not concealing his own errors. He conspires in the same zealous designs with Moses, and earnestly recommends an attention to the laws and statutes which that legislator had delivered. The book must have been a most valuable possession to the Israelites, as it contained the earliest and most authentic documents relative to the property of every tribe, and afforded to each the title of its respective inheritance.

It is necessary to remark, that there is some accidental derangement in the order of the chapters of this book, occasioned possibly by the mode of rolling up manuscripts anciently observed. If chronologically placed, they should be read thus: first chapter to the tenth verse; then second chapter; then from the tenth verse to the end of the first chapter; afterwards should follow the sixth and consecutive chapters to the eleventh; then the twenty-second chapter; and, lastly, the twelfth and thirteenth chapters, to the twenty-fourth verse of the latter ⁵.

Joshua succeeded Moses in the government of Israel, about A.M. 2553; and died in the 110th year of his age, A.M. 2578, at Timnah-serah; where he had retired, contemplating from Mount Ephraim, the well-ordered and peaceful government which he had established ⁶;

⁵ Bedford's Scrip. Chron. book v. p. 590. edit. 1741.

⁶ The Vatican copy of the Septuagint version has the following addition annexed to the account of Joshua's burial, in the thirtieth verse of the last chapter: "There they put with him into the sepulchre in which they buried him, the knives of flint with which he circumcised the kingdom of Israel in Gilgal, when he brought

and exhorting the people with his last words to a remembrance of God's mercy, and to an observance of his laws.

The memory of Joshua, and of his victories, was long preserved, and his reputation spread among the heathen nations ⁷. He is generally considered as the original of the Phœnician Hercules; and the scene of his victories, as well as the extent of the conquests themselves, is still discernible in the disfigured accounts which are given concerning that fictitious hero ⁸. It has been collected from monuments still extant, that the Carthaginians were a colony of the Tyrians who fled from the exterminating sword of Joshua ⁹; as also, that the inhabitants of Leptis in Africa, were primarily derived from Zidonians, who had been compelled to forsake their country in consequence of calamities brought upon it by the conquests of this great commander.

them out of Egypt, as the Lord commanded them; and they are there unto this day." The Alexandrian copy has it not. Vide Harmer, *Observations on Scripture*, vol. iv. p. 398.

⁷ Some traces of the miracles of the sun and moon being stayed for a whole day by Joshua, are discovered in the Chinese records, in Herodotus, Callimachus, Statius and Ovid. Vid. Martinii *Hist. Sinic.* lib. i. p. 37. edit. Amstel. 1659. Herod. lib. ii. c. 142. p. 173. Callim. *Hymn. in Dian.* lib. 181-2. Statius, *Thebais*, lib. iv. 1. 307. Compare also Keppel's *Personal Narrative*, &c. vol. i. c. 9. p. 186-7. with 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.

⁸ Procopius, *Historia de Bello Vandalico*, c. x. p. 400. edit. Venetiis inter Byzantin. *Hist. Scriptor.* Bochart. *Geog. Sacr.* 2d part, lib. i. c. 34. p. 662. Sallust. *Bellum Jugurth.* p. 210. edit. Amstelodam. 1689. The Mahometans relate many fabulous stories of Joshua. Vid. D'Herbelot. *Bib. Oriental.* sub voce Jeschova.

⁹ Allix's *Reflect. on Books of Old Test.*

The Samaritans are by some writers supposed to have received the Book of Joshua; there is still extant a Samaritan book entitled the Book of Joshua, which differs considerably from the Hebrew copy, containing a chronicle of events badly compiled, from the death of Moses to the time of the emperor Adrian. It consists of forty-seven chapters swelled with fabulous accounts. It is written in Arabic in the Samaritan character¹. After having been long lost, it was discovered by Scaliger, and deposited at Leyden, in manuscript, and has never been published.

The Jews suppose Joshua to have been the author of a prayer which they repeat in part on quitting the synagogue. It is in celebration of God's goodness for having granted them an inheritance superior to that of the rest of mankind².

¹ Fabricius, *Codex Pseudograph. Vet. Test.* p. 876. Edit. *Hamburgh et Lips.* 1713, and p. 130. Edit. *Hamburgh*, 1723.

² *Wagenseilii Tela Ignea Satanæ*; ed. *Altdorf*. 1681. p. 223, et seq.

OF THE

BOOK OF JUDGES.

THIS Book has been generally attributed to Samuel, in agreement with the opinion of the Talmudical doctors¹. Some writers have assigned it to Phinehas; some to Hezekiah; and some to Ezekiel; others have supposed that Ezra collected it from such memoirs as

¹ Bava Bathra, c. i. Kimchi Abarb. Isid. lib. vi. c. ii. The Talmud, from תלמוד, doctrine, is a Jewish book, containing explanatory remarks on the law, and revered by the Jews, as much as, or more than the law, as the great source of their religious opinions. It consists of two parts: the Mischna, or text; and the Gemara or complement. The former the Jews profess to have received as an oral law, delivered to Moses by God; but in reality it consists of traditions accumulated from the time of Simon, or Ezra, and contains some useful instructions. The Gemara is a commentary of wild fancies on the Mischna. There are two Talmuds, that of Jerusalem and that of Babylon: the last of which is most esteemed. It appeared in the sixth or seventh century, about 200 years after the former. Maimonides published a good commentary on it. Vid. Buxtorf. Recensio. oper. Talmud. Porta Mosis, in Pocock's Works, vol. i. Morin. Exercit. Biblic. Lexic. Buxtorf. Biblioth. Rabbin. Prideaux, Con. pt. i. book v. p. 258. Mark vii. 7, 8. 13. The popes, where they have had influence, have often procured the destruction of the Talmuds, as containing pernicious opinions. Much truth, however, is concealed under the chimerical expositions and accounts therein contained.

every judge respectively furnished of his own government. It seems, however, most probable that Samuel was the author; who, being a prophet or seer, and described in the Book of Chronicles as an historian, may reasonably be supposed (inasmuch as he was the last of the Judges) to have written this part of the Jewish history; since the inspired writers alone were permitted to describe those relations, in which were interwoven the instructions and judgments of the Lord².

The book appears to have been written after the establishment of the regal government, since the author, in speaking of preceding events, observes, that "in those days there was no king in Israel³;" which seems to imply that there were kings when he wrote. There is also some reason to think that it was written before the accession of David, since it is said in the twenty-first verse of the first chapter, that "the Jebusites were still in Jerusalem," who were dispossessed of that city early in the reign of David⁴. It was likewise written before the Books of Samuel⁵; and, therefore, if the author be understood, as is usually supposed, to speak in the thirtieth verse of the eighteenth chapter, of that captivity⁶ which happened in the time of Eli,

² Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. § 7. p. 1333.

³ Chap. xix. 1. xxi. 25. see also vi. 24. x. 4. xv. 19. xvii. 6. xviii. 30.

⁴ 2 Sam. v. 6—8.

⁵ Compare 2 Sam. xi. 21. with Judges ix. 53.

⁶ The captivity here spoken of must have happened before the reign of David, who would not have suffered the idolatrous images to remain among his people. When the ark was captured, many of the Israelites must have been taken likewise; and the Psalmist expressly calls this taking of the ark "a captivity." Vid. Psal. lxxviii. 60—62. as the wife of Phinehas lamented that then "the glory was departed from Israel." Vid. 1 Sam. iv. 22.

when the ark was captured by the Philistines, and the idol of Milcah was destroyed⁷; there is no objection to the general opinion, which attributes the book to Samuel⁸; who may be conceived to have written it in Ramoth Gilead, after the election of Saul. Events in this book are referred to and confirmed in the First Book of Samuel⁹.

The Book is properly inserted between those of Joshua and Samuel, as the Judges were governors intermediate between Joshua and the Kings of Israel. They were illustrious princes of the house of Judah¹, raised up by God, not in regular succession, but as emergencies required, when the repentance of the Israelites induced Him to compassionate their distress, and to afford them deliverance from their difficulties. They frequently acted by a Divine suggestion, and were occasionally endowed with preternatural strength and fortitude².

⁷ 1 Sam. iv. 11. and ch. v. Selden de Diis Syris, cap. ii. p. 280-2. Opera, tom. 2. Edit. London, 1726; and Calmet on Judges, ch. xviii. 30.

⁸ The word נביא, Nabia, which is used in this book, might well be employed by Samuel, who wrote the first part at least of the First Book of Samuel. Vid. 1 Sam. ix. 9. The house of God means the Tabernacle, as in Joshua.

⁹ 1 Sam. xii. 9, 10, 11. compare with Judges iv. 2. xiii. 1. iii. 12. ii. 11, 12, 13. vi. 11. vii. 1. xi. 6.

¹ They were called שופטים, in the Hebrew, which signifies Judges. They had the supreme power under some restrictions; and without the ensigns of royalty, being ministers of God, subservient to the theocracy. Vid. ch. viii. 23. Some reckon fifteen and some sixteen judges. They were sometimes elected by the people, on the performance of great exploits, and generally continued for life.

² Chap. ii. 18. vi. 14. 34. xi. 29. xiv. 6. 19. The Jews imagine,

After the death of Joshua, the nation appears for a short time to have had no regularly appointed governor³, but to have acted in separate tribes. They were for a few years retained in the service of God, by the elders who survived Joshua, but afterwards fell into a state of anarchy, for a period of which we have no account, but as to those particulars scattered towards the beginning and conclusion of this book. We find, however, that the people proceeded to the conquest of the remaining part of the country, but that, gradually forgetting the instructions of Moses, and of Joshua, and notwithstanding a rebuke which they received from an angel of God⁴, they suffered the inhabitants to remain tributary among them; who became, as had been repeatedly predicted, “scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes,” and as it were, “snares and traps” to seduce them to idolatry⁵. For this they were punished

without sufficient reason, that they were endued with the spirit of prophecy. Vid. Maimon. *More Nevoch.* pt. ii. c. xlv. p. 316. Edit. Buxtorf. 1629. Grotius in *Jud.* i. 1.

³ In the Samaritan chronicle, it is said that Joshua appointed his nephew Abel to succeed him, upon whom the government fell by lot; but this is a fabulous account. Vid. Saurin. *Dissert. sur Eglon, Roi des Moabites.* Hotting. *Smegma Orientale*; ed. Heidelb. 1658. p. 522.

⁴ Chap. ii. 1. by the word *מלאך*, ἄγγελος, nuntius, some understand a prophet, which it sometimes signifies, as in *Haggai* i. 13. But there is no reason why we should not suppose the messenger to have been an angel, as angels undoubtedly appeared on other occasions, the ministers of God's miraculous government of the Israelites.

⁵ *Exod.* xxiii. 33. xxxiv. 12. *Josh.* xxiii. 13. *Judg.* ii. 3. The Israelites were permitted to render tributary those nations who submitted to them, though they were to suppress their idolatrous worship, “to break down their images, and to destroy their groves.” But those nations who, in defiance of God's declared favour, opposed

and deprived of the Divine aid, so as to excite the complaints of their leaders ⁶, and given up to their enemies, being holden eight years in servitude to Cushan, king of Mesopotamia, till God raised up Judges to deliver them. Othniel appears to have been the first judge; though some writers say that Simeon, and others that Caleb ⁷ preceded him in the government of the people. During the intervals between the Judges, each tribe was governed by its respective elders; affairs of importance being referred to the great council, or Sanhedrim ⁸.

them, were to be destroyed; and as to the seven nations of Canaan, of those who resisted, "nothing that breathed was to be saved alive;" that every trace of idolatry might be swept away. Vid. Deut. xx. 10—18. vii. 1—6. 1 Sam. xv. 5. Though this destruction was enjoined only in case of resistance, yet with no idolatrous city whatever, were the Israelites allowed by the Divine command, to make any league or covenant; for in these the authority of those deities, whose sanction must have been abjured, would have been admitted, and some toleration given to a worship that might have tended to the seduction of the Israelites. Vid. Exod. xxiii. 32. They were, therefore, enjoined, gradually, to extirpate the civil and religious communities of the land, and to render the people tributary and dependent as individuals. All these instructions, however, the people violated, and suffered for their disobedience. Vid. Shuckford's Sacred and Profane History of the World, vol. iii. book xii. London, 1737.

⁶ Chap. vi. 13.

⁷ Bedford's Script. Chron. lib. v. c. iii. p. 506-7. Edit. London, 1730.

⁸ The great council appointed by Moses continued, probably, till the establishment of the monarchical government. Whether the Sanhedrim were the same council continued, or a subsequent institution in the time of the Maccabees, is uncertain. Like that, however, it consisted of seventy or seventy-two elders: mostly Priests and Levites, over which the high-priest generally, but not necessa-

The history of this book may be divided into two parts; the first containing an account of the judges from Othniel to Samson, ending at the sixteenth chapter. The second part describing several remarkable particulars that occurred not long after the death of Joshua, which are placed towards the end of the book in the seventeenth and following chapters, that they may not interrupt the course of the history. What relates to the two last Judges, Eli and Samuel, is recorded in the following book. The chronology of this period is entangled with many difficulties; but if we include the period of thirty-four years, which may be supposed to have intervened between the death of Joshua and the judicature of Othniel, the book extends its history from A.M. 2578, to the death of Samson, A.M. 2887, and the government of the Judges may be conceived to have continued from A.M. 2612, to the twenty-first year of Samuel's judicature, when Saul was anointed, A.M. 2929, that is, about 317 years⁹.

rily, presided. It decided on momentous affairs, civil and religious, and subsisted to the time of Christ, but with authority diminished in subjection to the Roman power. Matt. v. 21. Mark xiii. 9. Selden de Synedriis, Opera, vol. i. p. 766. Edit. 1726. Beausobre's Introduct. to Script. There were several inferior and dependent Sanhedrims. The word is derived from *συνέδριον*, a council or assembly. Numb. xi. 16. Herman Conragii de republica Ebræor. sect. 23. p. 256. apud Fascicul. Opuscul. quæ ad Histor. ac Philolog. Sacr. spectant. Roterodam. 1693. tom. 2.

⁹ St. Paul appears to reckon 450 years from the division of the land till the time of Samuel, (exclusive of Samuel's government, which is reckoned under the forty years assigned in the next verse to Saul) but as this computation would be inconsistent with other statements in Scripture, and especially with that in 1 Kings vi. 1. where the fourth year of Solomon's reign is made to coincide with

The periods stated in the book, if computed in succession, would swell to a much greater number of years; but they must be conceived sometimes to coincide as contemporary, being reckoned from different æras, which cannot now be exactly ascertained; and, perhaps, as Marsham has conjectured, some of the judges were coeval, reigning over different districts.

The Book of Judges presents to us a lively description of a fluctuating and unsettled nation; a striking picture of the disorders and dangers which prevailed in a republic without magistracy, when “the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through by-ways¹,” when few prophets were appointed to control the people², and “every one did that which was right in his own eyes³.” It exhibits the contest of

the 480th year after the deliverance from Egypt, Usher accepts from ancient manuscripts a different reading of Acts xiii. 20; according to which the 450 years are referred, not to the duration of the Judges, but to the period which intervened between the promise of Canaan made to Abraham, and the division of the land. The present reading, however, is more agreeable to the scope of St. Paul’s discourse, as well as best supported by authority; and, therefore, various other solutions of the difficulties that result from this account have been proposed. Many chronologers have imagined that *τετρακοσίους* is a mistake of the copyist of the Acts, for *τριακοσίους*; in which case St. Paul, speaking loosely (*ὥς*), might well reckon 350 years; for if we deduct from 480 years the forty-seven years which intervened between the Exodus and the division of the land, together with the eighty-four years which must be assigned to Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon, before the foundation of the temple, we shall have exactly 349 years. Vid. Usher, Chron. Sac. c. xii. Poli Synop. in 1 Kings vi. 1.

¹ Chap. v. 6.

² We read but of two prophets in this book. Vid. chap. iv. 4. and vi. 8. The high-priest, however, had the power of consulting God by means of the Urim and Thummim.

³ Chap. xvii. 6.

true religion with superstition; displays the beneficial effects that flow from the former; and represents the miseries and evil consequences of impiety. From the scenes of civil discord and violence which darken this his history, the inspired author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has drawn forth some illustrious examples of faith in the characters of Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah⁴.

Amidst the great vicissitudes of events described, in which the justice and mercies of God are conspicuously shown, we are much struck with the account of the memorable exploits of the judges; of Sisera's defeat and death; of the victory of Gideon; of the punishment of Abimelech; of Jephthah's inconsiderate vow⁵;

⁴ Heb. xi. 32.

⁵ It has been a subject of endless controversy, whether Jephthah did really offer up his daughter a "burnt-offering to the Lord," or only devote her to perpetual virginity, which might be considered as a sacrifice, when every woman looked forward to the production of the promised seed. The Jews and primitive Church believed that he did actually immolate her. In favour of this opinion, it has been observed, that it is supported by the construction of the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate versions, and by the Chaldee paraphrase; that if the vow extended not to the life, Jephthah might have "gone back;" Levit. xxvii. 2—8. that a devotion to celibacy was uncustomary among the Jews, and must have been dishonourable; that it could not have been requisite in a dedication to God's service, nor a sufficient subject for that general lamentation which prevailed on the occasion, and was continued with superstitious observance till later times; and, lastly, that if Jephthah esteemed himself bound to give up every consideration, rather than violate a solemn engagement with God, he might, for his intention or general character, be commended by St. Paul, however censurable and extravagant his promise, and the performance of it might have been. See Heb. xi. Psal. xv. 4. Joseph. Antiq. lib. v. c. 7. § 10. p. 210. Chrysost. Hom. 14. ad Popul. Antiochen. p. 144. tom. 2. Edit. Paris, 1718.

of the actions of Samson ; of the flagitious conduct of the Benjamites, of the destruction of Gibeah ; with the description of many other particulars that enliven the narrative, which is likewise much embellished by the beautiful song of Deborah and Barak, and the significant parable of Jotham. Many of the sacred writers, as well as St. Paul, allude to, or quote from, the book ⁶ ; and several relations contained in it point out the origin of numberless heathen fables ⁷. The whole period is distinguished by a display of extraordinary events, and by the most glaring and miraculous proofs of Divine interposition. Prosperity and afflictions are distributed with regard to the conduct of individuals. The history of God's government must necessarily be characterized by the marks and demonstrations of his immediate agency, and the selected instruments of his will may

Epiphanius, adv. Hæres. Opera, vol. i. lib. iii. tom. ii. p. 1055. Edit. Paris, 1622. and Dodwell. In support of the contrary opinion, it has been contended that לַתְּנוּחַ, which is translated in ch. xi. ver. 40. *to lament*, imports also *to hold converse with*, or *to offer gifts*. Vide R. Kimchi, Liber Radicum. Dr. Randolph proposes, by a new reading of the text, to maintain that Jephthah vowed to dedicate whatsoever or whomsoever came out of the door of his house, to meet him ; *and also*, to offer a burnt offering. See his Discourse, and on Levit. xxvii. 28, 29. Concerning the Cherem, see Selden de Jure Naturali et Gentium, lib. iv. c. 8. p. 477. and c. 11. p. 492. vol. 1. Edit. London, 1726, &c.

⁶ 1 Sam. xii. 9—11. 2 Sam. xi. 12. Psal. lxxviii. 61. Isaiah ix. 4. x. 26. and perhaps Matt. ii. 23. compare with Jud. xiii. 5.

⁷ The story of Nisus's hair ; of the golden hair given by Neptune to his grandson Pterelaus, which rendered him invincible while uncut ; that of Hercules and Omphale ; of the pillars of Hercules ; of the death of Cleomedes Astypolæus ; of Agamemnon and Iphigenia ; appear to have been ingenious fictions fabricated on the foundation of the accounts in this book.

well be expected to exhibit a succession of unprecedented exploits.

It should be observed, indeed, that some of the actions, which in this book are represented to have been subservient to God's designs, were justifiable only on the supposition of Divine warrant, which superseded all general rules of conduct ⁸. Without this, the deeds of Ehud ⁹ and of Jael ¹ might be pronounced censurable for their treachery, however prompted by commendable motives. And with respect to some other particulars, it is obvious, that the sacred author by no means vindicates all that he relates; and that the indiscriminate massacre of the people of Jabesh-Gilead, and the rape of the virgins at Shiloh, were certainly stamped with the marks of injustice and cruelty; and must be condemned on those principles which the Scriptures have elsewhere consecrated, though in the brevity of the sacred history they are here recorded without comment. The characters, likewise, of God's appointed ministers, however spoken of in this book, and in other parts of

⁸ God certainly may authorise what without his sanction would be questionable or unjust; as where he commands the Israelites "to spoil the Egyptians," and to extirpate the nations of Canaan. Vide Exod. iii. 22. Deut. xx. 10—18.

⁹ We are not to conceive, because God "raised up the Judges," that he directed them in all their actions. The relation, however, seems to intimate, that Ehud on this occasion acted by Divine authority.

¹ Jael's conduct, like that of Rahab, as described in the book of Joshua, appears to have arisen from a desire of assisting in God's declared designs in favour of his chosen people. As the exploit is approved in the hymn of Deborah, an inspired prophetess, we may suppose it to have been performed in compliance with a Divine impulse, otherwise it could not have been a subject of praise. Some, however, have thought, that Deborah only foretels Jael's secular happiness and future celebrity.

Scripture, as commendable for their general excellence, or particular merits, are presented to us in some points of view, as highly defective and blameable. It is easy, however, to discriminate the shades from the light, and to perceive, that in the description of such mixed characters as that of Samson, much is detailed as reprehensible; and while we are led to admire his heroic patriotism, we are taught also to condemn his criminal infatuation and blind confidence in Delilah.

With respect to those objections, which an ill-judging levity has suggested against the credibility of some transactions recorded in the book, they proceed either from want of attention to those constructions which the researches of the learned have enabled them to make²; or from a disregard to the character of the times described, when a boundless enthusiasm resulted from a confidence in the Divine favour.

² The relation, for instance, of Samson's setting fire to the corn of the Philistines, cannot reasonably be questioned by those who consider the character of Samson; and the great abundance of foxes (or jackals) that prevailed in Judea, which, indeed, was so remarkable, that many cities, and even provinces, were denominated after the word which we translate foxes. Vid. 1 Sam. xiii. 17. Josh. xv. 28. xix. 42. Judg. i. 35. also Cantic. ii. 15. Joseph. Antiq. lib. v. c. viii. § 7. p. 214. Some writers think that instead of *schualim*, *foxes*, we should read *schoalim*, *sheaves*, and translate *zanab*, *the extreme end*, instead of the *tail*. Vide Bernard Repub. des Lettres, p. 407. Stackhouse's Hist. of Bib. book v. vol. i. The Vulpinaria, or feast of the foxes, observed among the Romans, might have derived its origin from this transaction, some of the particulars of which Ovid describes in a fabulous account. Vid. Fast. lib. iv. l. 684 et seq. Bochart. Hierozoicon, lib. iii. c. xiii. Pars prior, p. 847. editio Lond. 1663. The extraordinary strength of Samson is not to be considered as the physical effect of his hair, though God judged proper to render the continuance of the former dependent on the preservation of the latter, which was the mark of his consecration to God as a Nazarite.

OF THE

BOOK OF RUTH.

THE Book of Ruth is a kind of supplement or appendix to the Book of Judges, and may be considered as an introduction to the history of David¹, related in the Books of Samuel. In the Hebrew canon it composed but one book with the former; and though various opinions have been entertained respecting its date², it is properly placed in our Bibles between the books of Judges, and Samuel³. The famine which occasioned Elimelech to leave his country, is said to have come to pass “in the days when the Judges ruled;” hence some have assigned the beginning of the history to the time of Gideon, who was raised up in defence of Israel, about A.M. 2759⁴, and under whom a famine is related to have happened⁵; notwithstanding which some Jewish

¹ Euseb. Ecclesiast. Histor. lib. vi. c. xxv. p. 225. edit. Paris, 1659. Hieron. Prol. Gal. Aug. de Doct. Christ. lib. ii. c. viii. tom. iii. edit. Paris, 1689.

² Houbigant Bib. Pref. to vol. ii.

³ The modern Jews place Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther, immediately after the Pentateuch, giving Ruth sometimes the first, and sometimes the fifth place.

⁴ Patrick, in chap. i. 1.

⁵ Judges vi. 3—6.

writers suppose the history to have occurred much earlier, in the time of Ehud ⁶.

The chief difficulty which exists in settling the chronology of this period, arises from a genealogical account of St. Matthew ⁷, in which it is stated that Boaz, who was the husband of Ruth, and the great grandfather of David ⁸, was the son of Salmon by Rachab; for if by Rachab we suppose to be meant, as is usually understood, Rahab ⁹, the harlot, who protected Joshua's spies about A.M. 2552, it is difficult to conceive that only three persons, Boaz, Obed, and Jesse, should have intervened between her and David, who was not born till about 2919. We must, however, in this case conclude, either with the learned Usher, that the ancestors of David, as eminent for righteousness, or as

⁶ Seder Olam. cap. xii.

⁷ Matt. i. 5, 6.

⁸ Ruth iv. 21, 22. and Matt. i. 5, 6.

⁹ We cannot now discover any motive which should have induced St. Matthew to mention Rachab in the genealogy of Christ, unless she were some person previously spoken of in Scripture; but many reasons may be assigned why she should be introduced in the lineage, if she were the Rahab whose conduct is mentioned by Joshua, (and who, though styled זִנָּה *zônah*, in the Hebrew, and πόρνη, by the Evangelists, is celebrated as an example of faith), still, however, it may be diffidently suggested, that the chronological discrepancies would be less considerable, if we could suppose her to have been a different person; and that the 400 years which intervened between the birth of Pharez, and the time of Shamgar, were filled up by Boaz and his six immediate ancestors. As a slight support to which, it may be remarked, that the wife of Salmon is spelt Παχάβ by St. Matthew, whereas in Hebrews xi. 31. and in James ii. 25. the harlot's name is written Παῖβ, as in the Septuagint version of Joshua ii. 1. There is not any mention in the Book of Joshua, or in any part of the Old Testament, of Rahab's marriage with Salmon.

designed to be conspicuous, because in the lineage of the Messiah, were blessed with extraordinary length of life¹; or else that the sacred writers mentioned in the genealogy only such names as were distinguished and known among the Jews. If, however, Boaz be considered as the grandfather of David, the history cannot be well assigned to the time of Eli², under whose priesthood it is stated to have happened by Josephus³, but it should be understood to have come to pass at some earlier period; not so far back as Shamgar, where Usher has placed it in the 2658th year of the world, about 133 after the conquest of Canaan, but probably about the year 2754⁴.

The book has been by some considered as the production of Hezekiah; by others it has been attributed to Ezra; but it was in all probability written by Samuel, agreeably to the opinion of many Jews and Christians⁵; and the prophet may be supposed by this addition to the book of Judges, to have brought down the history to the time of his own birth. It certainly was composed not only after the Judges had ceased to

¹ Usser. Chron. Sac. cap. xii. Poli Synop. in Ruth. And in Matt. i. 5. Patrick, Whitby, &c.

² The famine which occasioned Naomi to reside ten years in Moab, could not have come to pass so late as in the days of Eli, from the tenth year of whose judicature to the birth of David were only forty years; Vid. Ruth i. 4. Acts xiii. 21. 2 Sam. v. 4. for we cannot suppose so short a space of time only as thirty-nine or forty years to have intervened between the birth of Obed and that of his grandson David, who was the youngest of eight sons of Jesse. Vid. 1 Sam. xvi. 10, 11.

³ Joseph. Antiq. lib. v. c. 9. vol. i. p. 217.

⁴ Chron. Sac. par. i. c. xii. Du Pin. Lightfoot, &c.

⁵ Talmud, Schalsch. Brentius, Huet, Drusius, Patrick, &c.

rule, but after the birth, if not after the anointing of David⁶; whose descent from Judah the sacred writer seems to have designed to certify, as according to the prophecy of Jacob, the Messiah was to spring from that tribe⁷; and with this view he traces back the lineage of Boaz to Pharez, the son of Judah⁸; and grandson of Jacob⁹.

It contains an account of the conversion of Ruth, a Moabitess, and according to Jewish tradition, of the royal race of Moab, which nation was descended from Lot¹, and settled near the land of Judah, at the end of the Dead Sea, or Lake of Asphaltites. Ruth having married Mahlon, the son of Elimelech, who had sojourned in Moab, on account of a famine which prevailed in Judea, resolved, on the death of Mahlon, to accompany her mother-in-law in the return to her country. As Mahlon was of the house of Judah, Ruth relied probably on the promises made to that tribe, and had certainly become a proselyte to the Hebrew religion². After their arrival at Bethlehem, the former residence of Naomi, Ruth was compelled, by her distress, to claim kindred with Boaz, who, as the law of Moses directed³, took her to wife, and begat a son, from whom David descended.

⁶ Chap. i. 1. iv. 22. It is probable that David was not pointed out as an object of attention to the sacred historians till he was selected for the throne.

⁷ Gen. xlix. 10.

⁸ Gen. xxxviii. 29.

⁹ Gen. xxix. 35.

¹ Gen. xix. 37.

² Chap. i. 16. Buxtorf. Dissertat. de Sponsalibus et Divortiis, p. 41. edit. Basilæ, 1652.

³ The ancient law ratified by Moses in Deut. xxv. 5. is supposed to have applied only to the brother, or according to the Rabbins, only to the elder brother by the same father. Custom, however,

It may be here observed, that the Holy Spirit, by recording the adoption of a Gentile woman into that family from which Christ was to derive his origin, might intend to intimate the comprehensive design of the Christian dispensation ⁴.

It must be remarked, also, that in the estimation of the Jews it was disgraceful to David to have derived his birth from a Moabitess; and Shimei, in his revilings against him, is supposed by the Jews to have tauntingly reflected on his descent from Ruth. This book, therefore, contains an intrinsic proof of its own verity, inasmuch as it records a circumstance so little flattering to the sovereign of Israel ⁵; and it is only further necessary to appeal to its admission into the canon of Scripture for a testimony of its authentic character; or to mention that the Evangelists, in describing our Saviour's descent, follow its genealogical accounts ⁶.

The story related in this book is extremely interesting: the widowed distress of Naomi; her affectionate concern for her daughters; the reluctant departure of Orpah; the dutiful attachment of Ruth; and the sorrowful return to Bethlehem, are very beautifully told. The simplicity of manners, likewise, which is shown in the account of Ruth's industry and attention to Naomi;

seems to have extended the obligation of marrying the widow of the deceased to the next of kin. Vid. Ruth i. 13. Boaz was only a kinsman of Elimelech, and by his marriage with Ruth, he fulfilled the law in its extended interpretation, as well as that in Levit. xxv. 24, 25. Vid. Selden *Uxor Ebraica*. vol. ii. c. xii. p. 574.

⁴ Gen. xlix. 10.

⁵ Hieron. in *Tradit. Heb.* ad 1 Kings iii. Calmet's Preface to Ruth, and Ruth iv. 22.

⁶ Matt. i. 3—6. Luke iii. 32, 33.

of the delicate charity of Boaz⁷; and of his acknowledgment of his kindred with Ruth, affords us a pleasing contrast to the turbulent scenes which had been described in the preceding book. The respect, likewise, which the Israelites paid to the Mosaic law⁸, and their observance of ancient customs⁹, are represented in a very lively and animated manner. It has been remarked, that Ruth, in her wandering condition, might have suggested to Isaiah the description which he applied generally to the daughters of Moab, that they should be “as a wandering bird cast out of the nest¹.”

⁷ Chap. ii. 16. Howel's Hist. of Bible, vol. i. book iv. and Thomson's Palemon and Lavinia. Strangers were allowed to glean by the charitable precepts of the Mosaic Law. Vid. Levit. xix. 9, 10. Deut. xxiv. 19.

⁸ Chap. iv. 6. 10. J. Buxtorf. de Sponsal. et Divort. p. 27. edit. Basil, 1652.

⁹ Chap. iv. 7. The form of redemption here referred to was apparently different from the degrading ceremony observed towards him who rejected his brother's wife, as enjoined in Deut. xxv. 9. though Josephus seems to conceive that it was the same concisely described, Antiq. lib. v. c. ix. p. 217. The Chaldee paraphrase represents the kinsman to have drawn off his right-hand glove instead of his shoe. The mark of transfer among the more modern Jews was an handkerchief, as R. Solomon Jarchi informs us. Vide Selden de Jure Naturali et Gentium, lib. v. c. 14. p. 570. and lib. ii. c. 2. p. 180. Vide also Ruth iv. 11. and Seld. Uxor. Eb. vol. 2. lib. i. c. ix. p. 568, and lib. ii. c. xii. p. 626.

¹ Isa. xvi. 2. Hieron. Epist. ad Paulin.

OF THE

FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL.

THE relations contained in the Book of Ruth formed a kind of digression in the sacred history, with a particular view; but the general thread is now resumed respecting the Judges of Israel; and we are presented in this, and in the following Book, with an account of the events and occurrences which happened in the time of the two last Judges, Eli and Samuel; and of the two first Kings, Saul and David. It is uncertain whether these books are called the Books of Samuel, because he was the author of them, or because his history constitutes a principal part of the sacred account. They are in the Vulgate ¹ styled the first and

¹ The Vulgate was a very ancient version of the Bible into Latin, but by whom, or at what period it was made, is not known. The Old Testament of this version was translated from the Septuagint. It was in general use till the time of St. Jerom, and called also the Italic version. St. Jerom's translation was made immediately from the Hebrew into Latin, or was the Vulgate corrected by the Hebrew. It was executed about A.M. 384, and it was gradually received into the Western Church, in preference to all preceding versions. It was published at Paris, by Martianay and Pouget, in 1693. The present Vulgate, which is declared authentic by the Council of Trent, is the ancient Italic version, revised and improved by the labours of St. Jerom and others. This is the only translation allowed

second Book of Kings², as two of those four books which contain the history of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

The two books of Samuel were in the Hebrew canon considered but as one. The Talmudists³ suppose that Samuel wrote the twenty-four first chapters of the first book, and that the rest was supplied by the prophets Gad and Nathan. This opinion is founded upon these words in the first book of Chronicles⁴: “Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer;” and it is approved by many writers of considerable authority⁵; who maintain that the prophets

by the Church of Rome, and it is used by that church upon all occasions, excepting that, in the Missal and Psalms, some passages, or the whole of the ancient Vulgate, are retained, as are the Apocryphal Books, many of which St. Jerom did not translate. There are two principal editions of the received Vulgate, one published by Pope Sixtus the Fifth in 1590, the other by Clement the Eighth, which differs much from the former, though both are declared authentic from the Papal Chair, with much inconsistency, as the Protestants contend, but as the Papists maintain, only with latitude for a correct impression. Vide Kennicott's State of the printed Hebrew Text, and James's *Bellum Papale* and *Treatise on the Corruption of Scripture*. Some parts of the ancient Italic version, of which the copies are now lost, have been recovered from citations in the writings of the Fathers, and are published with supplementary additions, in Walton's *Polyglot*.

² These and the two succeeding books are called in the Greek, *Βασιλείων*, the books “of kingdoms.”

³ Bava Bathra, cap. i. Kimchi.

⁴ 1 Chron. xxix. 29.

⁵ Huët. *Demonst. Evang. prop.* iv. *Isid. Orat. lib. vi. cap. ii.* R. Kimchi, &c.

were the historians of contemporary events. It will appear evident, at least, that the books of Samuel were written before either the books of Kings or of Chronicles, if we compare them together; for in each of these last-mentioned books many circumstances are manifestly taken and repeated from the books of Samuel. We may, therefore, assent to the general opinion, that Samuel was the author of at least the greater part of the first book⁶; and probably he composed it towards the latter end of his life⁷. Certain, however, it is, from its admission to the canon, as well as from the predictions which it contains, that the book was the production of a prophet; not to mention that it is referred to by our Saviour in vindication of his disciples⁸. The first book of Samuel contains a space of near eighty years, if we reckon from the birth of Samuel, about or soon after A.M. 2868, to the death of Saul, which happened A.M. 2948.

⁶ Procopius Gazæus informs us, that the Syrians call the book the prophecy of Samuel.

⁷ Chapter v. 5. xxx. 25. ix. 9. In this last passage Samuel incidentally observes, that they who in his time and in that of Saul, were called prophets, were anciently denominated seers. The word prophet, (נביא) was in use, indeed in the time of Moses or Abraham. Vid. Gen. xx. 7. It seems then to have implied an interpreter of the Divine will, or a man endowed with a Divine spirit. In the time of Samuel, it was appropriated to one who foresaw future events. Vid. 1 Sam. iii. 20. x. 5. xix. 24. In the latter part of Samuel's life, the word seer might have become nearly obsolete, though occasionally used in, and after his time. But perhaps this remark might have been afterwards inserted for the instruction of later times, as possibly were some few other particulars. Vid. vii. 15. xiii. 5. xxvii. 8.

⁸ Comp. 1 Sam. xxi. 6. with Matt. xii. 3, 4.

The history opens with an account of the birth of Samuel. It records his consecration to the ministry, and his appointment to the prophetic office; the capture of the ark; and the denunciation and infliction of God's judgments on the house of Eli⁹; the curse on those who possessed the ark; its return, and the signal punishment of such as daringly prophaned its sanctity¹. It relates the election of Saul in conformity to the unadvised desire of the Israelites for a king²; the wars and evils which arose, as had been foretold³, in consequence of this change of government, illustrating the futility of dependence upon an earthly sovereign⁴. It describes the sins⁵ and rejection of Saul: the anointing of David, and the first display of his piety and

⁹ Chap. iii. 20. ii. 28—36. iii. 11. 14. compare with ch. iv. 11. xxii. 18—20. Joseph. Antiq. lib. vi. c. xii. § 4. p. 259. edit. Hud. 1 Kings ii. 26, 27.

¹ Chap. vi. 19. The text, as it now stands, represents 50,070 men of Bethshemesh to have been smitten upon this occasion for the presumptuous violation of God's express command. Vid. Numb. iv. 20. But the original words are more properly translated by Bochart: "he smote threescore and ten men, fifty out of a thousand men;" that is, the number being 1400, God smote seventy, a twentieth part. Josephus understood the passage thus; and it must be observed, in support of this interpretation, that Bethshemesh was but a village. Vid. Patrick on 1 Sam. vi. 19.

² The impropriety of this request will be more obvious, if we recollect that God had condescended to be holden in the character of a temporal king to the Israelites, residing, as it were, among them, and issuing his decrees from the tabernacle; to require a king was, therefore, to reject the theocracy. Vid. chap. viii. 7. xii. 12. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. ii. § 16. p. 1376. Edit. Hudson.

³ Chap. viii. 11—18.

⁴ Chap. xiii. 6—18.

⁵ See 1 Sam. xiii. 9—14. See also Exod. xvii. 16. Numb. xxiv. 20. and Deut. xxv. 17—19. compared with 1 Sam. xv.

heroism⁶; the disinterested friendship of Jonathan and David; the envious and ungenerous suspicions of Saul; the death of Samuel; the appearance of his spirit⁷, denouncing God's judgments against the impiety of Saul; in the accomplishment of which judgments the

⁶ The character of David is very beautifully delineated by the sacred writer, and his actions are placed before us in a manner well calculated to produce effect. He is first introduced to our notice as "a valiant and prudent man," anointed on the rejection of Saul; and the historian then goes back to relate an achievement of David's youth; for it appears that the combat with Goliath was previous, in point of time, to the driving away of the evil spirit of Saul, otherwise Saul and Abner must have known "whose son the stripling was;" and, therefore, the seventeenth chapter records particulars prior in point of chronology to those related in the sixteenth chapter. Vid. Warburt. Div. Legat. book iv. sect. 6. note *. Such anticipations are not unusual in the sacred writings, and they give much animation to the history; and the narration should be read in the following order: ch. xvii. xviii. 9. xvi. 14—23. Some writers, however, consider the thirty-nine verses which are omitted in the Vatican copy of the Septuagint, as an interpolation introduced into the Hebrew text, and the Alexandrian copy of the Greek version.

⁷ Chap. xxviii. The most probable and best supported opinion concerning this relation is, that God suffered Samuel's departed spirit, or a miraculous representation of his person, to appear to Saul, and as a punishment for his presumptuous impiety, to disclose his impending fate. The text positively calls him Samuel ("himself," in the original) and he prophesied truly: for "on the morrow," that is, soon after, Saul and his sons were slain, and the host of Israel defeated. The woman was herself terrified at a real appearance, when probably she designed a deception, and was preparing her incantations. Vid. Ecclus. xlvi. 20. Calmet, Commentaire sur Chapitre xxviii. p. 480. tom. ii. edit. Paris, 1724. 1 Chron. x. 13. Joseph. Antiq. lib. vi. c. 14. p. 269. Justin Martyr, Dial. cum Tryphone, pars sec. p. 364. Tertullian de Anima, p. 306, edit. Lutet. Paris. 1664.

book terminates, with the account of the miserable fate of Saul, and of his sons. Some vestiges and memorials of events recorded in this book continued long to exist⁸. The sacred writer illustrates the characters and describes the particulars of his history in the most engaging manner. The weak indulgence of Eli is well contrasted with the firm piety of Samuel. The rising virtues of David, and the sad depravity of Saul, under the influence and occasional possession of an evil spirit⁹, are strikingly opposed. The sentiments and instructions scattered through the work are excellent; and the inspired hymn of Hannah, which much resembles that of the blessed Virgin¹, discloses a grand prophecy of Christ, who is here for the first time in Scripture spoken of as the Messiah², or the anointed of the Lord, whose attributes are proclaimed as those of the exalted sovereign and appointed judge of the earth.

Samuel, the reputed author of this book, was obtained by the prayers of Hannah³. He was dedicated, from his childhood, to God, and then employed to renew the Divine threats which had been uttered against Eli and his sons⁴. He appeared as a prophet at a time when the prophetic spirit was but rarely known, and had indeed for some time ceased; he accepted the supreme

⁸ 1 Sam. v. 5. vii. 12.

⁹ See Granville Sharp's Case of Saul.

¹ Comp. 1 Sam. ii. 1—10. with Luke i. 46—55. See also Psal. cxiii. 7, 8.

² 1 Sam. ii. 10. The Messiah and the anointed are synonymous, משיח, Meshiach, is derived from מָשַׁח, Mashach, to anoint.

³ The word Samuel, according to the Hebrew derivation, signifies “asked from God.”

⁴ 1 Sam. iii. 1. 8. 11. compare with ii.

power in the government of his country ⁵ without ambition, and executed the important duties of his office with irreproachable integrity. When required by God, he resigned his power without reluctance; and in compliance with the Divine commands, elected two strangers in the government, to the exclusion of his sons. He was much feared and respected by Saul, and the whole nation; and was allowed by that monarch to judge Israel “all the days of his life ⁶.” The author of Ecclesiasticus justly celebrates him as a favoured servant of God, a righteous judge and a faithful prophet ⁷. He was addressed by many revelations from God ⁸; and the miraculous circumstances that demonstrated his appointment, as well as the prophetic spirit which inspired him, were so conspicuous, “that all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord, who let none of his words fall to the ground.” His first predictions concerning the destruction which impended over the devoted house of Eli were literally fulfilled to the

⁵ Although the chronicle of Alexandria and Sulpitius Severus assert that Samuel attained the priesthood, by which some understand the pontificate, Selden maintains that as he was not in the line of Aaron, but a Levite, he was not eligible to the high priesthood, which in his time was filled by Zadok and Abiathar. Vide Selden de successu in Pontificat. lib. ii. c. iii. p. 95. et Augustin in Psalm xeviii. 10. p. 1066. tom. iv. edit. Paris, 1691.

⁶ 1 Sam. vii. 15. Patrick observes, that this verse may mean, that Samuel was so diligent in the discharge of his duty that he gave himself no rest, but sat to judge causes every day. Some consider it as a subsequent interpolation. Samuel may be supposed to have died about two years before Saul, in the ninety-eighth year of his age.

⁷ Ecclus. xlvi. 13—20.

⁸ Chap. iii. Psal. xcix. 6, 7. Acts iii. 24.

second and third generation⁹, and these were followed by others which came to pass with striking exactness¹.

⁹ Chap. iii. 11—18. iv. 12—18. xxii. 18. 20. 1 Kings ii. 26, 27. Vid. also chap. ii. 34, 35. which contain prophecies that were verified in Zadok and his predecessor, Abiathar, but which were more fully accomplished (on the departure of the Mosaic priesthood) in the person of Christ the great high priest “for ever.” Vid. 1 Kings i. 39. ii. 26, 27. 1 Chron. xxix. 22. Heb. v. 10.

¹ Chap. viii. 11—18. x. 2—9. xii. 25. xxviii. 19.

OF THE
SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL.

IF we assent to the opinion of the Talmudists, that Samuel did not continue the history beyond the twenty-fourth chapter of the First Book of Samuel, we may assign this Second Book, as well as the latter part of the former, to the prophets Gad and Nathan. Many learned Jews have contended, from a fanciful resemblance of style between these and the works of Jeremiah, that this prophet compiled them from the memoirs of Samuel, Gad, and Nathan¹. We may conclude then, that what was not written by Samuel, was added by some of those inspired persons who were educated in the schools of the prophets, which he is supposed to have established². These were colleges for the instruction of select youths in the knowledge of the law, and the exercise of devotion³. Upon many of these

¹ Bava Bathra, Abarbenel, Grotius, and Locke. In 2 Macc. ii. 13. it is said, that Nehemiah gathered together the acts of David, with other writings; which perhaps means only that he collected them for the library which he is there said to have founded.

² The passage in xxiii. chap. of this book, which professes to give the last words of David, as well as other particulars which should seem to have occurred after the death of Samuel, may thus be supposed to have been inserted after their respective deaths.

³ 1 Sam. x. 5.

disciples God conferred the spirit of prophecy; and probably most of the subsequent prophets were elected from these schools; not, indeed, necessarily⁴, but because therein fitted and prepared for the sacred influence. They were under the direction of a prophet really inspired, who was considered as a father to the society; and Samuel was probably the first who possessed that dignified character⁵.

The Second Book of Samuel bears an exact relation to the preceding history, and is likewise connected with that which succeeds. We see throughout the effects of that enmity against other nations, which had been implanted into the minds of the Israelites by the Mosaic law, and which gradually tended to the extirpation of idolatry.

The history contains a period of near forty years, from about A. M. 2948 to 2988. It describes the establishment and prosperity of David's reign, during its first years; of which he showed himself worthy, as well by his generous respect for the memory of Saul, as by the excellency of those many other qualities which his maturer piety displayed. It relates the extinction of Saul's family, and David's grateful and unsuspecting kindness to the surviving son of Jonathan. The inspired author then records the fall of David; and exhibits a sad proof of the wickedness to which the noblest minds may be seduced by passion. He repre-

⁴ For Amos informs us, that he himself was not, chap. vii. 14. It was likewise proverbially said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Is he raised to a dignity to which he was not disciplined by his education?

⁵ Whitby's School of the Prophets; Smith's Discourse on Prophecy.

sents to us God's anger softened, but not appeased, by David's repentance, who was soon after punished by the death of the child, and by many domestic calamities. The transgression of Amnon was the first consequence of his bad example: "the sword did not depart from his house," and "evil rose up against him⁶," in the ambitious intrigues and rebellion of Absalom. The troubles which he personally suffered were the commencement of a long train of afflictions; we soon behold him a degraded and fugitive sovereign, reviled by his meanest subjects; and severely punished for his conduct towards Uriah, by the incestuous outrage of his son⁷. The submissive repentance⁸, however, and restored virtues of David, procured through the Divine grace, his pardon and re-establishment on the throne; which he dignified by the display of the greatest moderation, justice, and piety. If in the exultation of his recovered prosperity, God suffered him⁹ to be betrayed into an ostentatious numbering of the people, "his heart smote him" to immediate repentance, and he piously threw himself on God's mercy, and intreated that he alone might suffer from the indignation which he had provoked.

The vicissitude of events which the book describes;

⁶ Nathan's prophetic threat, chap. xii. 10, 11.

⁷ Chap. xii. 10—12. xvi. 21, 22. 25, 26.

⁸ David is impressed with the most pious sentiments when the ark was carried out in his flight from Jerusalem, and he commanded Zadok the priest to return into the city in peace, saying to Zadok, "if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it, and his habitation:" but if he thus say, "I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." ch. xv. 25, 26.

⁹ Chap. xxiv. 1. and 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

the fall and restoration of David; the effects of his errors, and his return to righteousness, are represented in the most interesting manner, and perpetuate valuable lessons to mankind. The author, in the concise style of sacred history, selects only the most striking features of character, and the most important incidents in the revolutions of which he treats. On a collective view of the scattered particulars which are disclosed, we perceive that the character of this chosen servant of the Almighty, exhibits the model of a sovereign¹, in reverence of which succeeding sovereigns were instructed to walk², since he considered the glory of God as the principal object of his regard, looking to the ark as to the most sacred and nearest concern³, and making every preparation for the temple which it was reserved for Solomon to build⁴. Among the conspicuous beauties of the book, we can never sufficiently admire the feeling lamentation over Saul and Jonathan⁵; the expressive parable of Nathan; the resignation of David, his expectation of a future life⁶; and his triumphant hymn⁷.

The prophecies contained therein are, first, that which blended temporal and spiritual blessings in the promises relative to Solomon and the Messiah; the

¹ Chap. viii. 15.

² 1 Kings xv. 3—5. 11. ² Kings xiv. 3, &c.

³ Chap. vi. 13—19.

⁴ Chap. vii. 5, &c.

⁵ Chap. i. 17—27. This song is supposed to have been sung at the funeral of Saul and Jonathan; it being customary among the Jews to solemnize the obsequies of their friends with dirges accompanied by music. 2 Chron. xxxv. 24. Wolfii Curæ Philolog. in Matt. ix. 23. vol. i. p. 170. edit. 3rd. Hamburg, 1739.

⁶ xii. 23.

⁷ xxii.

building of the temple⁸, the permanency of David's throne, and the perpetuity of that kingdom which it prefigured⁹. Secondly, the predictive denunciations of Nathan¹; and, lastly, the figurative descriptions in the Psalms of David²; by whom the "Spirit of the Lord spake," assuring him of an "everlasting covenant³."

This book, likewise, as well as the former, contains other intrinsic proofs of its verity. By describing, without disguise, the misconduct of characters highly revered among the people, the sacred writer demonstrates his impartial sincerity; and by appealing to monuments which bore testimony to the events which he records, he brought forward indisputable evidence of his faithful adherence to truth⁴. The Books of Samuel connect the chain of sacred history by detailing the circumstances of an interesting period. They relate the restoration of the ark and its establishment in Jerusalem by David; and as they delineate minutely the life of that monarch, they point out his typical relation to Christ; and likewise illustrate remarkably his inspired productions, which are contained in the Book of Psalms. His triumphs over the enemies of his country were, in some measure, figurative of spiritual victories over the adversaries of the church; while at the same time, they contributed to the accomplishment of God's promises, by the extension of the dominion of

⁸ Chap. vii. 13.

⁹ Chap. vii. 12. 16. See also Psalm lxxii. and lxxxix. 4. Heb. i. 5. David seems to have apprehended the great extent of God's promises, and in consequence to have burst out in rapturous acknowledgment of his goodness. 2 Sam. vii. 19—21. 1 Chron. xvii. 17.

¹ Chap. xii. 10, 11.

² Chap. xxii.

³ Chap. xxiii. 2. 5.

⁴ Chap. vi. 17. and Chap. xxiv. 25.

the Israelites to the utmost limits which had been holden out to Abraham⁵; thereby affording a pledge of the future completion of the Divine assurances with respect to the universal establishment and glory of the Christian church. Heathen authors have borrowed from the books of Samuel, or have collected from other sources many particulars of those accounts which he gives⁶. This remark will equally apply to the Books of Kings; and, indeed, to all the books of sacred history⁷.

⁵ Gen. xv. 18. xvii. 8. compare with 2 Sam. viii. 1—15.

⁶ Eupolemus ap. Euseb. Præp. lib. ix. c. 30. p. 447. Huet. Propos. 4. p. 164.

⁷ Theophilus ad Autolycum, lib. iii. Euseb. Præp. lib. ix. Clem. Alex. strom. i.

OF THE
FIRST BOOK OF KINGS.

THIS and the following Book¹ were, in the Hebrew canon, reckoned but as one. They cannot with certainty be assigned to any particular author, though some have ascribed them to Jeremiah², and some to Isaiah. There are many, likewise, who contend that they are the production of Ezra; and probably this opinion is most just, for they appear to be a collection, or historical abridgment of annals, selected from the memoirs and books of the prophets; which are herein frequently referred to³, as records, doubtless, of contemporary prophets. Thus “the Book of the Acts of Solomon,” is mentioned in this very book⁴, and was probably written by Nathan, Ahijah the Shilonite, and Iddo the seer⁵. Hence, therefore, those who by the

¹ They were anciently called the Third and Fourth Book of Kings; and were sometimes denominated from the first words, “והמלך דוד.”

² Bava Bathra, Grotius, Isidore, Procopius, Kimchi, &c.

³ Josephus Cont. Apion. lib. i. sect. 7. p. 1333. Theodor. Præf. in Lib. Reg. tom. ii. p. 230. edit. Lut. Par. 1642. Huet. Propos. iv. p. 161. Edit. Par. 1679.

⁴ Chap. xi. 41.

⁵ 2 Chron. ix. 29.

Book of the Acts of Solomon have understood the Books of Kings, have supposed that they were composed by these prophets⁶: but we elsewhere read that Shemaiah the prophet was employed with Iddo the seer, in writing the acts of Rehoboam⁷; that the acts of Abijah were written in the story of Iddo⁸; the Book of Jehu the prophet likewise related the acts of king Jehoshaphat⁹; and Isaiah wrote the acts of Uzziah¹, of Hezekiah², and probably of the two intermediate kings, Jotham and Ahaz, in whose reigns he flourished; so that we may conclude, that from these several records, as well as from other authentic documents, were compiled the Books of Kings. They appear to have been arranged by one person, as the style and manner are uniform; and may with much probability be assigned to Ezra, who possibly compiled them during the captivity³.

The first book comprises a period of 126 years, from the death of David, A.M. 2989, to that of Jehoshaphat. After the description of the decay and death of David, we are presented with a most striking history of the reign of Solomon; of his wisdom and magnificence; of the building of the temple; of his extended com-

⁶ Cajetan, Serrarius, &c.

⁷ 2 Chron. xii. 15.

⁸ 2 Chron. xiii. 22.

⁹ 2 Chron. xx. 34. and 1 Kings xvi. 1.

¹ 2 Chron. xxvi. 22.

² 2 Chron. xxxii. 32. and Isa. xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii. and xxxix. where much of Hezekiah's history is incorporated with Isaiah's prophecies. Theodor. Præf. in Lib. Reg. p. 230.

³ The Chaldaic names by which the months in these books are denominated, were not used by the Jews till in or after the captivity.

merce to Ophir⁴; and of the visit of the queen of Sheba⁵.

To this succeeds an account of the miserable dotage and apostasy of Solomon; illustrating the frailty of human nature, and the sad effects of sensual and uncontrolled indulgence. The history is preceded by a prospect of that threatened rending of the kingdom

⁴ Various have been the conjectures concerning the situation of Ophir. Josephus places it in the East Indies, in a country which, by his description, should appear to be Malacca. Bochart contends that it was Taprobana, or Ceylon. Calmet places it in Armenia, Montanus in America, and Huetius in the eastern coast of Africa. As various have been the sentiments with respect to Tharshish, some considering it as having been near, and others as distant from Ophir: all that the Scriptures tell us is, that the navy of Tharshish came in once in three years, and afforded Solomon immense wealth; of which we know not the amount, since we can make no exact estimate of the value of the talents specified: they were, however, certainly of less value than the Mosaic talents. Vid. Prid. Præf. to Con. Bochart. Phaleg. lib. ii. c. xxvii. p. 157. Bruce's Travels. Dissertation sur le pays d'Ophir. Mémoires de la Littérature, tom. xxx. p. 83.

⁵ The most learned writers maintain, that the queen of Sheba came from Yemen, in Arabia Felix. She is called by Christ, "the Queen of the South," and is said by him to "have come from the utmost parts of the earth," as the southern part of Arabia was considered by the ancients. She is supposed to have been a descendant of Abraham by Keturah, whose grandson Sheba peopled that country. She, therefore, probably resorted to Solomon for religious instruction. Vid. 1 Kings x. 1. and hence our Saviour's encomium, Matt. xii. 42. She is called Balkis by the Arabians. The Ethiopians pretend that she was of their country, and many fabulous stories are told of her by different writers, under the name of Nicaule, Candace, Marqueda, &c. Vid. Ludolph's Hist. Ethiopica, lib. ii. cap. 3. edit. Frankfort, 1681. Discourse on Queen of Sheba, attributed to Dr. Johnson, vol. xv. Calmet, Dict. under word Nicaule.

which was to take place under his son ⁶. In the prophecy, and in the accomplishment of the memorable event, we perceive the exact adherence to the principle of respect to the righteousness of the father, in the mitigation of the punishment on the son, which was looked to in the faith of David ⁷, and to which the Almighty repeatedly declared he would have regard in his judgments, particularly in the case of Solomon ⁸. Afterwards are related the accession of Rehoboam; his rash and impolitic conduct, and the consequent separation of the ten tribes, which happened about A.M. 3029. The establishment of a distinct kingdom was effected and confirmed by God's appointment under Jeroboam ⁹, whose character formed a remarkable contrast to that of David ¹; and whose profligate ambition led him to idolatry and wickedness productive of the most deplorable effects. The Divine favour which had hitherto extended protection to the country, and even secured its frontiers from invasion, while the inhabitants went up to worship at Jerusalem, seems now to have been withdrawn, and the land to have become exposed to the incursions of its enemies. The account of the separation is followed by a concise sketch of the his-

⁶ Chapter xi. 11, 12. God is represented in Scripture as sometimes (especially in cases of idolatry) "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children," when the measure of guilt was completed; and in the foreknowledge that their descendants should persist in evil, God revealed as a punishment to the disobedient, those calamities which awaited their families. It was declared, however, to those who repented, that they might avert the Divine vengeance. Vid. Levit. xxvi. 40—42. 1 Kings xxi. 29.

⁷ Psal. lxxxix. 30—33.

⁸ 1 Kings xi. 10—13. 29—36. 39. xii. 19—24.

⁹ Chap. xi. 11. xii. 20. 24.

¹ Chap. xvi. 19. 26. 30, 31.

tory of the two kingdoms, in which particular periods are characterized by very animated relations; as that of the disobedient prophet; of the accomplishment of the prophetic curse of Joshua with respect to the rebuilding of Jericho²; of the widow of Zarephath; of Elijah and the prophets of Baal; of Benhadad's pride and defeat; of Ahab's injustice and punishment. In the course of these events, we contemplate the exact accomplishment of God's promises and threats; the wisdom of his dispensations, and the mingled justice and mercies of his government.

The book is stamped with intrinsic marks of inspiration: of the prophecies which it contains, some were speedily completed³, but that which foretold that Josiah, mentioned by name, should be born unto the house of David, and slay the high-priests, was not fulfilled till above 350 years after it was delivered⁴. Some of its prophetic denunciations were uttered under figurative description⁵; and Micaiah, to illustrate the infatuation which God had suffered to prevail

² Chap. xvi. 34. compare with Joshua, chap. vi. 26.

³ Chap. iii. 13. compare with iv. 24, 25. vi. 12. xi. 11—13. 30—39. xiv. 10. 14. xvi. 1—4. Jehu, in this last prophecy, foretold that God would make the house of Baasha like that of Jeroboam; and it deserves to be remarked, how exactly the threat was fulfilled; for as Nadab, the son of Jeroboam reigned two years, so did Elah, the son of Baasha; and both were slain by the sword. Vid. xv. 25—28. xvi. 8—10. Vid. also, for other predictions, chap. xvii. 1. (compared with James v. 17.) xx. 13. xxi. 19—24. Patrick, &c.

⁴ Chap. xiii. 1—3. compared with 2 Kings xxiii. 15—20. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. 4. edit. Hudson. Euseb. Præparat. Evangel. lib. vi. c. 11. p. 284. See also other prophetic promises and threatenings long after fulfilled, ix. 3—9.

⁵ Chap. xxii. 17.

in the counsels of Ahaz, that it might mislead him to destruction ; unfolds to the misguided monarch the danger of his projected enterprize, under a representation received in a vision ; in which an imaginary council, and the supposed agency of a lying spirit are introduced, in order to explain the Divine conduct in some analogous proceedings⁶. Both the Books of Kings are referred to by our Saviour and his Apostles⁷.

⁶ Chap. xxii. 19—28. Vid. also 2 Kings vi. 17. Job i. 6—12.

⁷ Matt. xii. 42. Luke iv. 25—27. Acts vii. 47. Rom. xi. 2—4. James v. 17, 18.

OF THE
SECOND BOOK OF KINGS.

CONCERNING the author of the Second Book of Kings, it has been treated in the preceding preface; and it is here only necessary to repeat, that the Second was united with the First Book of Kings in the Hebrew canon, and considered but as one with it; and that it was compiled by Ezra, or some other inspired person, from the records of former prophets.

The history contained in this Book describes the government and actions of many successive Kings of Judah and Israel, for the space of about 300 years: from the death of Jehoshaphat, A. M. 3115, to the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple, A. M. 3416. The connection and occasional quarrels which subsisted between the two kingdoms during part of this time, till the conquest of Samaria by Shalmanezzer, seem to have induced the sacred writer to blend the two histories, as in some measure treating of the same people. Both nations appear to have departed with almost equal steps from the service of the true God; and in the history of each we are presented with a succession of wicked and idolatrous kings, till each had completed the measure of its iniquity.

Both Israel and Judah, though they invariably experienced prosperity and affliction in proportion to their obedience or disobedience, were infatuated by their perverse inclinations; and in a long series of their respective sovereigns, we find few only who were awakened by God's judgments to a sense of their true interest and duty. The whole period seems to have been dark and guilty, the glory of the kingdom being eclipsed by the calamities of the division; and by the increasing miseries of idolatry and ambition. Successive tyrannies, treasons, seditions, and usurpations, and the punishment which they entailed, serve at once to illustrate the evil character of the times; and the equity of the Divine government. The long suffering of God is remarkably evinced in the book, and his forewarnings and judgments were imparted and accomplished with gradual and progressive advancement. The captivity of Naphthali¹ preceded that of the remaining tribes, and the invasion and conquest of Samaria, with the leading away of its people held out strong, though disregarded, admonitions to Judæa.

The events are described with great simplicity, though in themselves highly interesting and important. The account of Elijah's assumption into heaven; of Elisha's succession to his ministry; and of the series of illustrious miracles performed by Elisha; the story of Naaman; and of the panic flight of the Syrians; the history of Benhadad and Hazael; of the predicted death of Ahab and Jezebel, and their children; and of the destruction of Baal's prophets, are all pregnant with instruction, and have supplied a theme for frequent

¹ Chap. xv. 29.

dissertation. We perceive in these impressive histories, the characters and qualities of men painted with fidelity; and the attributes of God displayed with great effect. The particulars and circumstances are sketched out with a brief and lively description, and the imagination lingers with pleasure in filling up the outlines that are presented to our view. Few histories afford such striking relations, illustrating at the same time the events of public and private life. The sacred author, regardless of minute order, and of the succession of events, seems sometimes desirous only of presenting us with a view of the state of religion among the people, and of illustrating the genealogy of Christ. In particular, we observe, how the revolt of the ten tribes and their subsequent captivity contributed to keep up the distinction of the tribe of Judah; and to make the prophecies which foretold that the Messiah should descend from this branch, more conspicuously accomplished.

The predictions described as delivered and fulfilled in this book, are those which foretold the death of Ahaziah²; the birth of a son to the Shunammite³; the recovery of Naaman⁴; abundance in Samaria⁵; the crimes and cruelty of Hazael⁶; the recompence of Jehu⁷; the three victories of Joash effecting deliverance from Syria⁸; the defeat of Sennacherib⁹; the

² Chap. i. 16.

³ Chap. iv. 16.

⁴ Chap. v. 10.

⁵ Chap. vii. 1.

⁶ Chap. viii. 10. 12.

⁷ Chap. x. 30.

⁸ Chap. xiii. 14—19. compare with 25.

⁹ Chap. xix. 6, 7. 28, 29. 33. and Herod. lib. ii. c. 141. p. 172. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. 1. vol. i. p. 431. This destruction is said,

prolongation of Hezekiah's life¹; the Babylonish captivity²; and the peaceful reign of Josiah³.

After the captivity of the ten tribes, the colonies brought up from Babylon and other places, adopted the Hebrew religion, and blended it with their own idolatries; and henceforward, in point of time, we hear little of the inhabitants of Samaria. The kingdom of Judah still continued for above a century to provoke God's anger by its disobedience and idolatry, notwithstanding Isaiah and many other prophets exerted all their powers during the period to lead the people to repentance, by every motive of interest and fear. The good reign of Hezekiah, though lengthened by Divine providence, was too soon succeeded by the "evil days

in the Babylonish Talmud, and in some Targums, to have been occasioned by lightning. It might, perhaps, have been effected by the destructive hot winds so frequent in those parts. Vid. Thevenot's Travels, part ii. book i. ch. xx. b. ii. ch. xvi. part 1. book ii. ch. xx. Jeremiah speaks of a destroying wind, where the Arabic renders it a hot pestilential wind, chap. iv. 11. li. 1. Isaiah threatens Sennacherib with "a blast," which might possibly be called the angel of the Lord. 2 Kings xix. 35. Isaiah xxxvii. 7. 2 Kings xix. 7.

¹ Chap. xx. 6. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. 2. p. 435.

² Chap. xx. 17, 18. God appears to have revealed to Hezekiah the calamities which awaited his descendants in the Babylonish captivity, as a punishment for his ostentatious display of his treasures, in which he seemed to confide; and for not having rather professed his confidence in God, whose mercies he had so recently experienced. These prophecies, and those in the ensuing chapters relative to the same captivity, were literally fulfilled above 100 years after. Vid. chap. xxi. 12—14. xxiii. 27. compared with ch. xxiv. 13. and Dan. i. 1—6.

³ Chap. xxii. 20.

of Manasseh," in whose time the temple, and even the volume of the law, seem to have been almost entirely neglected. In the reign of Josiah religion for a short time revived; a public copy of the law was discovered and read⁴, and idolatry for a few months was suppressed; but the tide of iniquity having rolled back with accumulated force, Jerusalem is besieged and taken, the city and temple spoiled, and the noblest of the nation led captive to Babylon. The book concludes with the account of the second siege by Nebuchadnezzar, which happened about eighteen years after the first; then the city and temple⁵ were burnt, and soon after the destruction was completed by the massacre, or flight of the remnant which had been left amidst the ruined cities of Judæa.

⁴ Chap. xxii. 8. xxiii. 2.

⁵ According to Usher's computation the temple was burnt about 424 years after it was built. Josephus, who conceives it to have been burnt 470 years 6 months and 10 days from the time of its building, observes with astonishment, that the second temple was burnt by the Romans in the same month, and on the same day of the month that the first temple was set on fire by the Chaldeans; and the Jewish doctors add, probably with as little truth, that the Levites were singing the same hymn in both destructions, repeating Psalm xciv. 23. these words: "He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and he shall cut them off in their own wickedness, yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off." Vid. *Antiq. lib. x. c. 8. de Bell. Jud. lib. vi. c. iv. p. 1279.*

OF THE

FIRST BOOK OF CHRONICLES.

THE Jews formerly reckoned the two Books of Chronicles but as one¹; which was entitled the Books of Diaries², or Journals, in allusion to those ancient journals which appear to have been kept among the Jews. The Books of Chronicles, indeed, as well as those of Kings, were in all probability copied, as to many of their historical relations, from these ancient chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah³. Such chronicles must unquestionably have existed, since in the Books of Kings there are frequent references to Books of Chronicles, as containing circumstances which are not found in those so entitled in our canon; not to mention that these sacred books were written after the Books of Kings. The Books of Chronicles which we now possess, were so named by St. Jerom: they are distinguished in the Septuagint as the books of “things

¹ They now adopt our division, as well as in the preceding books, in conformity to our mode of citation from concordances, of which they borrowed the use from the Latin church.

² דברי הימים, *dibrē hajjamim*. Verba dierum, that is, The words of days; extracts from Diaries. They are called Chronicles from the Greek word *χρονικός*.

³ Josephus, cont. Apion. lib. i. § 7. p. 1333.

omitted⁴:" and they are supposed to have been designed as a kind of supplement to the preceding books of Scripture; to commemorate such important particulars as had not been noticed, because not immediately connected with the plan of former books. They are generally, and with much probability, attributed to Ezra⁵; who has used a similar style of expression, and whose book appears to be a continuation of them⁶. Ezra, if he were the author, might have digested them by the assistance of Haggai and Nehemiah; as well from historical records, as from the accounts of contemporary prophets.

These books were certainly compiled after the captivity, as they mention the restoration by Cyrus, and some circumstances that occurred after the return⁷. The author, however, appears sometimes to speak as one who lived previously to the captivity⁸; but this

⁴ Παραλειπομένων. Thus Xenophon wrote the *paralipomena* of the Peloponnesian war, as a supplement to the history of Thucydides.

⁵ This book appears to have been compiled before that of Nehemiah, by whom it is cited (Neh. xii. 23), though the genealogy of the descendants of Zerubbabel is said to be brought down much below the time of Ezra; for if the Zerubbabel here mentioned was the same who conducted the people back from captivity, the account may have been swelled by collateral kindred; or possibly increased by subsequent additions. St. Matthew, however, gives, in his first chapter, a genealogy so different, that it appears to be that of a different branch, if not of a different family. Comp. 1 Chron. iii. 19. et seq. with Matt. i. 13. et seq. and Grotius, in Matt. i. 23.

⁶ Comp. the last verses of 2 Chron. with beginning of Ezra. Patrick's Comm. in 2 Chron. xxix. 21.

⁷ 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21—23. xxxv. 25.

⁸ 1 Chron. iii. 19. iv. 41—43. 2 Chron. viii. 8. x. 19. xx. 26. xxxv. 25.

probably must have been in consequence of his transcribing, without alteration, the accounts of earlier writers.

The Books of Chronicles, though they contain many particulars related in preceding books, and supply several circumstances omitted therein; are not to be considered merely as an abridgment of former histories, with some supplementary additions; but as books written with a particular view; in consistency with which, the author sometimes disregards important details in those accounts from which he might have compiled his work; and adheres to the design proposed, which seems to have been to furnish a genealogical sketch of the twelve tribes, deduced from the earliest times. The object was to point out those distinctions which were necessary to discriminate the mixed multitude that returned from Babylon; to ascertain the lineage of Judah; and to re-establish, on their ancient footing, the pretensions and functions of each tribe. The author appears to have intended to afford, at the same time, an epitome of some parts of the Jewish history; and in this first book, taking up the account at the death of Saul, he presents his countrymen with the picture of David's reign; especially dilates on his zeal for religion; and on the preparations which he made for the building of the temple; probably with design to excite the reverence and emulation of those who were about to rebuild it. He describes particularly the regulations and arrangements adopted by David with relation to the Priests and Levites; as well as to the appointment of the musicians and other persons employed in the service of the temple, which David established on a great and magnificent scale;

improving it with the introduction of hymns, of which there is a fine specimen in the sixteenth chapter of this book, expressive of the most fervent gratitude to God.

The author, in repeating some particulars related in the preceding books, specifies the names of the persons who were employed, and active on great occasions; by this means furnishing each tribe with an account of the actions of its respective ancestors.

The genealogical tables of this book must have been highly important to the Jews, who were led by the prophetic promises to be extremely observant of these particulars. They exhibit the detail of the sacred line through which the promise of the Messiah was transmitted⁹. The precedence of the several families, their marriages, and many advantages, were often dependent on the accuracy of these accounts; and those, who could not prove their descent, were deprived of many privileges. A regular and unpolluted lineage was especially necessary to those who aspired to the priesthood; and such as could not produce it were deemed incapable of admission to that high office¹. Ezra, likewise, by pointing out the division of families, as recognized

⁹ The genealogies contained in this book are carried back without interruption to Adam, through a period of nearly 3500 years. They afford a striking proof of the solicitude which prevailed among the Jews to ascertain the completion of the promises; as also of the vigilant care with which the sacred accounts were preserved. They could not easily be corrupted, for most of the people could repeat them *memoriter*. The veneration for them was condemned by St. Paul as excessive and useless, after the appearance of the Messiah. 1 Tim. i. 4. Tit. iii. 9.

¹ Ezra ii. 61, 62. Selden de Success. in Pontificatum, lib. ii. cap. ii. p. 156. and cap. iii. p. 161. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. Maimon. in Mishnah Biath. c. vi. § 11.

before the destruction of Jerusalem, enabled each tribe, at the return from the captivity, to be restored to its appropriate inheritance. These genealogical accounts are likewise still useful in many respects²; and, however they may appear sometimes irreconcilable with modern systems of chronology, they were certainly considered as accurate by the evangelical writers, inasmuch as they are cited in the New Testament³.

The authority of the book is, likewise, established by the accommodation of a prophetic passage selected from it to the character of our Saviour by St. Paul⁴; by a signal prophecy of the erection of a temple by Solomon with its plan and services revealed to David⁵; by a typical assurance of the eternity of Christ's kingdom⁶; as well as by other occasional predictions⁷. It may be added, also, as remarkable, that an inspired acclamation of David to the praise of God in this book, breathes the same sentiments of piety which were afterwards uttered in similar expressions by our Saviour, and which by St. John, in his enraptured visions, are ascribed to the blessed spirits who celebrate the praises of God in heaven⁸.

² We collect from them, among other things, that Nathan, from whom, according to St. Luke, our Saviour was descended, was the son of David by Bathsheba, (Bathshua,) 1 Chron. iii. 5.

³ Matt. i. Luke iii. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. § 8. p. 1333. Grotius Annot. in lib. Carpzov. p. 292. Huet. Demonstrat. Evang. Prop. iv. Walteri Officin. Bib. p. 555. Lightfoot Chron. Vet. Test. p. 142.

⁴ 1 Chron. xvii. 13. xxii. 10. Heb. i. 5.

⁵ Chap. xxviii. 11. 19.

⁶ Chap. xvii. 13, 14.

⁷ Chap. xxii. 9, 10.

⁸ Compare 1 Chron. xxix. 10, 11. with Matt. vi. 13. and Rev. v. 12, 13.

OF THE

SECOND BOOK OF CHRONICLES.

THIS Book, as well as the former, with which it was originally united, was probably compiled by Ezra, from the writings of the different prophets who are severally mentioned in Scriptures as the historians of their respective periods¹; as well as possibly from ancient chronicles which are supposed to have existed, and which may be conceived to have been composed by the priests, some of whom are called Memorialists, or Recorders, as Jehoshaphat², and Joah the son of Asaph³. The book contains many things omitted in the historical books which precede. It begins with a description of the reign of Solomon; and dilates with particular exactness on the munificent piety of that monarch, in the construction of the temple; minutely specifying its ornaments, agreeable no doubt to the pattern described to David, as typical of spiritual decorations which were to embellish the Christian church⁴; a subject highly interesting and useful to the

¹ 1 Chron. xxix. 29. 2 Chron. ix. 29. xii. 15. xiii. 22. xx. 34. xxxii. 32. xxxiii. 19. xxxv. 26, 27.

² 2 Sam. viii. 16.

³ 2 Kings xviii. 18.

⁴ See 1 Chron. xxviii. 11. 19.

Jews; who at the time when this book was composed, were preparing to rebuild the temple. Hence the account of the solemn consecration of the first building; of the noble and comprehensive prayer of Solomon; and of the covenanted promises which God graciously imparted at the dedication, when the glory of the Divine presence was manifested⁵, must have afforded much consolation to the Jews, scarcely yet reviving from the despondence of captives. Then is repeated from the Book of Kings, the representation of the magnificence and prosperity which Solomon enjoyed, agreeably to God's promise⁶.

After this, we are presented with a recapitulation of the history of the Kings of Judah, occasionally intermixed with relations respecting Israel, when connected with Judah. Great part of this history is selected either immediately from the book of Kings, or both Kings and Chronicles, which were copied from some larger annals, known under the title of the Books of Kings; since frequent references are herein made to some books of Kings, and occasionally to circumstances not extant in the canonical books⁷. These accounts, however, in the books of Chronicles, are enriched with many additional particulars. They afford us a lively picture of the state of the kingdom of Judah; and of the various vicissitudes and revolutions which it sustained under different princes. They serve, as the author seems to have designed, greatly to illustrate the necessity of depending on God for defence, without whose protection kingdoms must fall. The advantage

⁵ Chap. vii. 1. 3. 12—22.

⁶ Chap. i. 11, 12.

⁷ Chap. xvi. 11. xxi. xxiv. 27. xxv. 26. xxviii. 26. xxxii. 32. xxxiii. 18. xxxv. 27.

derived from obedience to the laws of God, and the miseries which resulted from wickedness and sin, are strikingly shown. The book abounds with useful examples; and the characters are forcibly displayed by a contrasted succession of pious and corrupt princes. The change and defection even of individual persons, from righteousness to evil, is shown with much effect. In the representation with respect to the sovereigns of Judah, we perceive the decline of many from obedience to idolatry, and the recovery of Manasseh alone, from unrighteousness to repentance⁸.

The Divine wrath was occasionally incensed to the infliction of immediate punishment for peculiar depravity, as in the instance of Uzziah, who was punished with leprosy for invading the priestly office, and offering to burn incense⁹. The rebellion of Israel, and the contest between the two kingdoms; the preservation of Joash from the destruction which overwhelmed the rest of the house of Judah; the discriminating judgments of GOD with respect to Jehoshaphat¹; the struggles between idolatry and true religion; the opportune discovery of the copy of the law; with many other interesting particulars which exhibit the interposition of the Almighty, defeating evil, and effecting his concerted purposes, deserve to be considered with great attention. During this period an extraordinary number of prophets was employed to awaken contrition, to point out the impendent ruin of the country, and to open prophetic views of the kingdom of the Messiah; their labours, however, were

⁸ Chap. xxxiii. 1—19.

⁹ Chap. xxvi. 16—21.

¹ Chap. xviii. 31. Chap. xix. 1, 2.

ineffectual to convert the people, who soon beheld successive invasions of Judæa, and were finally led into captivity.

Several predictions are scattered through the books: as the promises made to Solomon²; to Jehoshaphat³; to Ahab⁴; to Jehoram⁵; to Amaziah⁶; to Josiah⁷; and to others⁸. Some sentiments appear to be transcribed from it into the New Testament⁹.

The varieties and apparent differences which exist between these books and those of Kings, with respect to numbers, names, and dates, have deterred the Hebrew writers from commenting on them. These, however, are to be attributed to those various causes which have been before detailed¹; to our ignorance of periods so long elapsed; to the different scope of the sacred writers; and to the mutilations and corruptions in minute particulars which have especially prevailed in the book of Chronicles; for these books appear to have been copied with unusual carelessness; and in none is the punctuation so defective.

The second book contains a brief sketch of sacred history, from the accession of Solomon to the throne, A. M. 2988, to the return from the captivity, A. M. 3468: a recapitulation not only very useful to the Jews, but

² Chap. i. 12. vii. 17—22.

³ Chap. xix. 2. xx. 15. 17. 37.

⁴ Chap. xviii. 2, 3. 10. 19. 24.

⁵ Chap. xxi. 12—15. Compare with 18, 19.

⁶ Chap. xxv. 7. 12. ⁷ Chap. xxxiv. 22—28.

⁸ Chap. xxxiii. 8.

⁹ Compare 2 Chron. ii. 5, 6. with Acts vii. 48, 49. and xvii. 24; also 2 Chron. xix. 7. with 1 Pet. i. 17.

¹ Introduction and preface to Historical Books.

which reflects great light on other parts of Scripture¹, and exhibits some coincidence with profane accounts.

The two books jointly considered, present in a connected view, a compendium of the Jewish history, from the time of Saul to the return from the captivity. In almost all the Hebrew manuscripts, they are placed as the conclusion of the Bible. In most of the versions, as in our translation, they immediately succeed the Books of Kings, and precede the Book of Ezra. This appears to be the proper order, and is supported by the Cambridge manuscript. Dr. Kennicott supposes that the two last verses of the Second Book of Chronicles were improperly added to it by a transcriber, who carelessly wrote down the beginning of Ezra; and on discovering his mistake, broke off abruptly, and beginning Ezra again, repeated the verses with proper distinction of place².

¹ Hieron. Epist. ix. ad Paulin. et Epist. ad Domnion. St. Jerom justly remarks, that it were folly to pretend to a knowledge of Scripture without an acquaintance with the Book of Chronicles.

² See Kennicott, Dissertation on 1 Chron. xi. 1. vol. i. p. 492.

OF THE
BOOK OF EZRA.

THIS Book was certainly written by Ezra. That he wrote the four last chapters has never been questioned, since, in several parts of these, he evidently professes himself the author, by speaking in the first person¹. Some critics have pretended that the six first chapters must have been produced by a person more ancient than Ezra, because Ezra is said in the seventh chapter², to have gone up from Babylon after the events described in the six first chapters, in the time of Artaxerxes Longimanus: whereas in the fifth chapter, the author has been thought to speak of himself as present at Jerusalem, in the time of Darius Hystaspes³. If this be not a mistake, Ezra may perhaps be supposed to have accompanied Zerubbabel in the first return from

¹ Chap. vii. 27, 28. viii. 1. 15. 24. ix. 5. ² Chap. vii. 1.

³ Chap. v. 4. This verse is usually considered as an answer of the Jews. It may possibly, however, be regarded as a question of Tatnai and his companions. See verse 10. Perhaps we should read as in the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic versions, "then said they," and the objection is removed, and the sense amended.

the captivity⁴; and he might have been again sent up to Babylon to counteract the representations of those who opposed at the Persian court the rebuilding of the city and temple; and the account of his departure, which is given in the seventh chapter, perhaps refers only to his going up with that commission and power which he received, eighteen years after, from Artaxerxes. But whether Ezra were or were not at Jerusalem at the time when this answer is supposed to have been made to Tatnai, he may well be conceived, either as copying a public record of the transaction, or as relating a speech of the Jews, to have used the expression of "We said unto them," meaning by "we," his countrymen; which is surely no uncommon mode of speaking. Such objections are very futile; and there is no reason to question the authenticity of any part of the book, which from the highest antiquity has been attributed to Ezra; who certainly at least digested it; and probably towards the end of his days⁵.

It is written with all the spirit and fidelity that could be displayed by a writer of contemporary events. It is a continuation of the Jewish history, from the time at which the Chronicles conclude; and the connexion of the two accounts is evident, since the Book of Ezra begins with a repetition of the two verses which terminate the Books of Chronicles. The sacred writers pass

⁴ Nehem. xii. 1. If the author of this book were not the same person with the Ezra mentioned by Nehemiah, he might still have gone up from Babylon to Jerusalem before the seventh year of Artaxerxes.

⁵ Huet. *Demon. Evang.* Carpzov. *Introd. in Lib. Canonic.* V. Test. Brentii *Præf. Colonii Bibl. Illust. in Lib. Esd. Walteri Officin. Biblic.* p. 559.

over the time of the captivity as a sad period of affliction and punishment: during which, if the people were indulged in the exercise of their religion, they had few events to record; and therefore we have no general history of their circumstances; and must have recourse to the Books of Esther and those illustrious prophets who flourished among the Jews in Assyria, for the only particulars that can be obtained concerning their condition.

The book begins with an account of God's having disposed Cyrus, either by positive injunction, or by disclosing to him his long-predicted designs, to promote the rebuilding of the city and temple of Jerusalem. It relates the accomplishment of some illustrious prophecies in the release⁶ of God's people, which that monarch granted in the first year of his reign over Babylon; and in the return of the Jews⁷ to their own country after a captivity of seventy years⁸, A.M. 3468.

⁶ Isaiah xliv. 26—28. A prophecy uttered concerning Cyrus, described by name near 200 years before he appeared: justly noticed with admiration by heathen writers. It should be observed, that the two persons foretold by name in prophecy, were remarkable for eminent virtues. Among the Jews, Josiah, of whom the sacred writers declared that there was no king like unto him, before or after his time. 1 Kings xiii. 1, 2. 2 Kings xxiii. 2—25. Among the Gentiles, Cyrus, whose eminent qualities are beautifully described by Xenophon in his *Kύρου Παιδεία*.

⁷ Scaliger de Emend. Temp. lib. vi. p. 576. Edit. Colonix Allob. 1629.

⁸ The name of Jews seems to have been derived from the name of Judah, and it is remarkable that the Jerusalem Targum renders the prophecy of Jacob, with respect to Judah—"Judah, to thee shall all thy children confess, and by thy name shall all the Jews be called." The Jews returned from Babylon fifty years after the taking of Jerusalem: but the seventy years which Jeremiah predicted as the period

We are then presented with a list of the leaders, and the numbers of captives who returned under Zerubabel, and perceive how fatally the nation had been diminished and brought low by successive defeats and dispersions⁹. We contemplate the long train of a harassed people restored from bondage and returning to their country, which had for many years laid desolate¹. We behold them returning to their subjection to the Law of Moses and the Prophets², erecting a temporary altar and service, and laying the foundation

for the duration of the captivity, are reckoned from the third or fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, A. M. 3398. Vid. Jer. xxv. 1. 11. xxix. 10. At this period Nebuchadnezzar first invaded Judæa, and carried off captives. Dan. i. 1. 3. 2 Kings xxiv. 1—4. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6. Patrick in Jerem. xxv. 11. xxix. 10. Dan. i. 1. Zech. i. 12. vii. 1—5. and Prid. Connect. part i. book iii. p. 105—9. Before Christ, 536.

⁹ Cyrus might have been the more disposed to release the Jews from the increase of population by the arrival of his followers. The Persians wished to emigrate, but were restrained by Cyrus. Herodotus, lib. ix. c. 122. p. 746. Many of the Jews remained in the countries into which they had been carried. The Jewish writers say, that only the dregs of the people returned. It should be remarked that Ezra says, that "the whole congregation together was 42,360;" though, if we calculate the separate numbers, they amount but to 29,818. Ezra, perhaps, omits the detail of some individuals, collectively reckoned: as those of the ten tribes, or those who could not find their registry; or possibly the numbers are in some instances corrupted.

¹ Since the land had lain desolate only fifty-two years from the death of Gedeliah, some suppose that as the sabbatical year was occasionally observed by pious princes, the Jews had neglected the law concerning the sabbatical year, only from the beginning of the reign of Asa; that is, 364 years. Vide Preface to Leviticus, p. 109. note 4. Compare 2 Kings xix. 29. Isa. xxxvii. 30. with Lev. xxv. 5—7. and Universal Hist. vol. x. p. 178.

² Chaps. ix. x.

of their temple. Afterwards are described the lamentations of those who remembered the magnificence of Solomon's building; the opposition excited by the Samaritans and others, whose assistance had been rejected; the interruption occasioned by their intrigues; and, lastly, the finishing and dedication of the temple, about A.M. 3489³, and the celebration of the Passover⁴.

Ezra then relates his return with his companions to Jerusalem; confesses the disobedience of the people to God's laws, by intermarrying with the Gentile nations of the land; describes his own pious and conciliatory prayer; the repentance of the people, and their separation from the wives and children, who not being of the holy seed, might, if suffered to intermingle with the Jews, have rendered uncertain the accomplishment of the prophecies; and he concludes with an enumeration of those who had transgressed: stigmatizing with im-

³ The Jews tell our Saviour, that their temple had been forty-six years in building; which must mean the temple as repaired and enlarged by Herod. This work was begun in the eighteenth year of his reign; from whence to the thirtieth year of Christ was a period of forty-six years; and the temple was then entirely finished; nor according to the account of Josephus, at the time of Agrippa, near sixty years after the birth of Christ. *Mat. John ii. 20.* Joseph. *Antiq. lib. xv. c. xi. 699. de Bell. Jud. lib. i. c. xxi. p. 1006.*

⁴ It is necessary here to mention, that Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho, asserts that the following speech of Ezra was in the ancient Hebrew copies of the Bible, but expunged by the Jews, viz. "Ezra said to the people, this passover is our Saviour, and our refuge; and if you will be persuaded of it, and if you shall have thoroughly reflected upon it, and it shall have sunken into your hearts that we are about to humble him in a sign, and after these things we shall rest our hope in him, this place shall not be made desolate through all time, saith the God of hosts; but if you will

partial indignation the names of even the priests and rulers who had offended in this lamentable violation of the law⁵. The work should be read with the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, which illustrate the condition and conduct of the people, and the circumstances in which they were placed. The predictions delivered by the prophets, while they reproved the murmurings of the people, consoled them in their dejection and despondence, by leading them to look forward to the glory of the Messiah, to be displayed in the second temple⁶.

The history contains a period of about seventy-nine years: from A.M. 3468, when Cyrus became master of Persia, to A.M. 3546, when Ezra effected the reform described in the last chapter of his book; for between the dedication of the temple and the departure of Ezra from Babylon, in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, is a period of fifty-seven or fifty-eight years; which this book passes over in silence, only

not believe in him, neither hearken to his preaching, ye shall be a triumph to the Gentiles." P. 292. Edit. Thirlb. 1722. The passage, however, probably never formed a genuine part of Scripture, since it could not have been surreptitiously removed from all the copies.

⁵ The great object of the separation of the Jews from their strange wives was defeated in the instance of Joiada, whose marriage with the daughter of Sanballat eventually occasioned or confirmed the schism of the Samaritans, and the re-establishment of a separate government, together with the building of a temple; penal effects of a transgression of the law similar to those foretold to Solomon after a similar transgression. See 1 Kings xi. 1—13. Ezra ix. 14. Nehemiah xiii. 23—28. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. 7, 8. Vol. i. p. 500—1.

⁶ Haggai ii. 7—9. Zech. ii. 10. iii. 8—10.

mentioning that the Jews had, during that time, intermixed with the Gentiles.

This book was written in Chaldee⁷ from the eighth verse of the fourth chapter to the nineteenth verse of the sixth chapter, and from the twelfth verse of the seventh chapter to the twenty-seventh verse; for as this part of the work contains chiefly letters, conversations, and decrees uttered in that language, it was consistent with the fidelity of the sacred historian, to describe the very words which were used; especially as the people recently returned from the captivity were familiar, and perhaps more conversant with the Chaldee than even with the Hebrew tongue; and it was probably about this time that the Chaldee paraphrases began to be used; for it appears, by Nehemiah's account⁸, that all could not understand the law, which may mean that some of them had forgotten the Hebrew during their dispersion in the captivity⁹. Some assign, likewise, to this time, the origin of the Jewish synagogues, though it is possible that they existed before the captivity¹.

Ezra was of the sacerdotal family, a descendant of Seraiah², in a right line from Aaron. He succeeded Zerubbabel in the government of Judæa, by a commis-

⁷ The Chaldee, or Syriac, was the language then used over all Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, &c.

⁸ Neh. viii. 2. 8. Isaac Casaubon Epist. 390. p. 468. Edit. Hagæ-Comitum, 1638.

⁹ Univ. Hist. vol. x. book ii. p. 220.

¹ Psalm lxxiv. 7, 8.

² Chap. vii. 1—5. He calls himself the son of Seraiah, which only implies his descendant; or at least, it is not probable that he was the immediate son of the high-priest Seraiah, who was slain at the taking of Jerusalem. 2 Kings xxv. 18. Prid. Con. Part I. B. V. Edit. London, 1718.

sion which lasted twelve years, to A.M. 3558; at the expiration of which term he either returned to Babylon to give an account of the state of the province of Judæa; or else retired into a private station in his own country; co-operating, doubtless, in the pious designs of Nehemiah, his successor, by whom it is related soon after, that Ezra produced and read the law of Moses to the people at their request³. Ezra, indeed, appears to have been particularly well skilled in the law, to have given much attention to the study of the Scriptures, and to have been well versed in the interpretation of them. He styles himself a ready scribe⁴, and professes to have prepared himself to instruct the people in the statutes of God: the tradition, therefore, of his having made a collection of the sacred writings is probably well founded. We know, indeed, from Josephus, that the Jewish priests, after every important war, were accustomed, on the establishment of peace, to digest new registers from the ancient records of the priests⁵;

³ Neh. viii. 1—3.

⁴ Ezra vii. 6. The word, סופר *sopher*, implies one skilful in learning, or in the interpretation of Scripture. The origin of the scribes is uncertain; they were probably first employed in suberviency to the prophets, and, perhaps, educated in their schools. Judges v. 14. 1 Chron. xxvii. 32. Jerem. xxxvi. 26. They seem to have been established as an order of men after the captivity, and to have risen into repute after the cessation of prophecy. They are mentioned in the New Testament as doctors of the law, and teachers of the people. Matt. xxii. 35. and Mark xii. 28, &c. They appear in the later times to have corrupted the law by their traditions, and to have become deficient in purity of manners. Matt. xv. 3. v. 20. Luke xx. 46. Of the inspired scribes, of whom Simon speaks, there is no account in Scripture. See also Prideaux, Part I. B. V. p. 261.

⁵ Οἱ περιλειπόμενοι τῶν ἱερέων καὶνὰ πάλιν ἐκ τῶν ἀρχαίων γραμ-

and there can be no doubt that they exercised also a vigilant care to compare and to preserve the Scriptures free from corruption.

Ezra, therefore, may well be supposed to have set forth a correct copy after the re-establishment of the Jews: and probably with the assistance of the great synagogue⁶, which particularly flourished in the time of Artaxerxes Longimanus; not that there is any reason to imagine that the sacred books were lost during the captivity; as some have absurdly conceived from the fabulous relation of a pretended burning of the law, and of the restoration of the Scriptures by divine revelation; which account is given only in the apocryphal book of Esdras⁷: a work of little or no authority. The copies of the law were too much revered to be lost; and Daniel⁸, we know, was in possession of, or, at least, refers to one during the captivity. He likewise quotes the prophecies of Jeremiah⁹; and probably other persons had copies of the Scriptures, many of them being favoured by the conquerors. If, indeed, the sacred vessels of the temple were so carefully preserved, we may well conceive that the authentic manu-

μάτων συνίστανται, are the words of Josephus, cont. Apion. lib. 1. § 7. p. 1333.

⁶ Irenæus adv. Hæres. lib. iii. c. xxv. p. 255, 6. Edit. Grabe, 1702. Tertul. de Cultu Feminar. lib. i. § 3. p. 151. Edit. Par. 1664. Clem. Alex. Strom. I. p. 410. Edit. Potter. Basil. Epist. ad § 5. tom. iii. p. 129. Edit. Paris, 1730. Chilon, &c. Chrysost. Homil. 8, c. v. in Epist. ad Hebræos, p. 90. Edit. Paris, 1735. D'Herbelot Biblioth. Orient. sub voce Ozair. Ben. Seraiah et Koran. cap. Bacra. Introd. p. 6.

⁷ 2 Esdras xiv. 21.

⁸ Chap. ix. 11. 13. Vid. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. § 8. p. 1333.

⁹ Dan. ix. 2.

scripts of the Hebrew Scriptures were safely deposited at Babylon; and perhaps restored to Zerubbabel, or Ezra, on their return to Jerusalem. But wherever preserved, Ezra certainly produced the Law, and read it to the people¹; and the other books of Scripture were collected by him and Nehemiah², or by the great synagogue.

Ezra was a most useful person to the Jews, who reverence his memory with a regard almost equal to that which they entertain for Moses. He is not particularly styled a prophet in Scripture; but our Saviour makes no distinction between the authors of the sacred books, except that of "Moses and the Prophets." Ezra was undoubtedly an appointed minister of God; and he wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit, or his book would not have been admitted into the Hebrew canon; or received as sacred from the earliest ages of the Christian church.

Ezra is reported by some traditionary accounts to have died in the hundred-and-twentieth year of his age, and to have been buried at Jerusalem³; though others say that he died in Persia, and was interred on the banks of the river Samura; where his tomb is shown⁴. Besides the books which are ascribed to Ezra in the apocryphal part of our Bible, there have been spurious constitutions, benedictions, and prayers attributed to him; as likewise a revelation, a dream, and a prophecy relative to the Roman empire; together with a calendar of pretended auspicious and unlucky days, none of which deserve attention.

¹ Nehem. vii. 2. and Ancient Univ. Hist. vol. iii. p. 418.

² 2 Macc. ii. 13.

³ Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. v.

⁴ Benjamin Tudela.

OF THE

BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

THE Book of Nehemiah being subjoined in the Hebrew canon to that of Ezra, as a continuation of his history, was often considered as his work¹: and in the Latin and Greek Bibles it is called the Second Book of Ezra; but it undoubtedly was written by Nehemiah, in a more simple style than that employed by Ezra, and he professes himself the author of it in the beginning, and uniformly speaks in the first person. It was probably admitted into the catalogue of the sacred writings by some rulers of the great synagogue².

Ezra appears to have continued near ten years in the government of Judæa, after the reform which he mentions in the last chapter of his book: persisting, probably, in his endeavours to restore religion, and to promote the prosperity of his country. Circumstances were, however, so unfavourable and adverse to his designs, that in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longi-

¹ Hieron. Præf. in Reg. Euseb. Chron. ad an. 1584.

² When Isidore asserted, that the second book of Ezra was not in the Hebrew canon, he meant the apocryphal book attributed to him; for he says that Ezra's first book contained the words of Ezra and Nehemiah.

manus³, A.M. 3559, we find, from Nehemiah, that representations were made to him at Babylon of the afflicted state of the Jews; and of the ruinous condition of their city, of which the walls were yet unrepaired.

This book begins with an account of Nehemiah's grief at this report; of his application to Artaxerxes for permission to visit and rebuild Jerusalem, "the place of his fathers' sepulchres." This he obtained, probably by the entreaty of Esther, the Queen⁴, who favoured the Jews. Nehemiah then relates his departure, and arrival at Jerusalem with authority; feelingly describes the desolate state of Jerusalem; viewed with melancholy contemplation in the silence of the night, and details with affecting interest his exertions to repair its dismantled walls. He records the names of those patriotic men who assisted him on this occasion; the conspiracy of the Ammonites, and other enemies, against the work, and the defeat of their designs. After the finishing of the walls and fortifications, Nehemiah applied himself to other public objects. The scarcity of the inhabitants in the large city of Jerusalem first excited his attention. He fortunately at this time found a register of those persons who returned from the captivity under Zerubbabel: which he repeats in the seventh chapter⁵, in order to complete the resti-

³ Not Artaxerxes Mnemon, as some have imagined. Vid. Scalig. de Emendatione Temporum, prolegomena, p. 45. et lib. vi. p. 591. Edit. Coloniae Allobrogum, 1629, and Patrick. The month Chisleu, mentioned in the first verse of Nehemiah, answers to a part of our November and December.

⁴ Chap. ii. 6.

⁵ Chap. vii. This genealogy differs from that given by Ezra in

tution of their possessions to the respective tribes; and that none but the Levites and descendants of Aaron might officiate in the service of the temple, and of the priesthood.

Nehemiah then describes the public reading of the Law to the people; the celebration of the Feast of the Tabernacles⁶; and other religious appointments, observed with a pathetic commemoration and thanksgiving for God's former mercies, as described in preceding books of Scripture. An account follows of the renewal of the covenant of obedience and respect to God's law, recorded as a memorial, with the names of those who signed it, and a catalogue of those who were appointed

the second chapter of his book, with respect to names and numbers; which difference Prideaux attributes to alterations made by Nehemiah, in compliance with changes that had happened since the departure from Babylon. It is remarkable that the two accounts agree in the total amount; and the sum of the numbers, which are separately detailed, will correspond, if to the 29,818 specified by Ezra, we add the 1765 persons reckoned by Nehemiah, which Ezra has omitted; and, on the other hand, to the 31,089 enumerated by Nehemiah, we join the 494, which is an overplus in Ezra's book, not noticed by Nehemiah; both writers including in the sum total 10,777 of the mixed multitude, which is not particularized in the individual detail. The accounts unquestionably agreed when they were received into the canon, unless where there might be some obvious cause for a variation; and probably the differences that now exist have originated in the carelessness of the copyists. Sharp's Answer to Kennicott and Commentators. Seda. Olam. Rabba. c. 29.

⁶ The Scenopegia, or Feast of Tabernacles, was a grand festival in memory of the Israelites having dwelt in tents in the wilderness. It began the 15th September, and was celebrated for eight days with great joy. The observance of it seems to have been much insisted on by the prophets; and as it argued a sense of God's former mercies, it seems to have been attended with a blessing. Vid. Zech. xiv. 16, 17.

by lot, or who consented to live at Jerusalem, then surrounded by hostile neighbours. The book concludes with a description of the reformation, both civil and religious, which Nehemiah effected; the last act of which, the removal of the strange wives, was, according to the general computation, accomplished about A.M. 3574⁷; but it could not have happened, as Prideaux has, on very sufficient grounds, determined, till A.M. 3595⁸; at which time he supposes the first period of Daniel's prophecy to conclude⁹, and the Scripture history to close.

The work, which is written with a detail of circumstances which could have resulted only from truth, affords very obvious but important instruction. The result of the zealous confidence felt and excited by Nehemiah, which enabled him and his people, by the Divine aid, to recover the city, and raise up its muniments from a state which had excited the derision of its enemies, while compelled to work with weapons of defence, as well as with instruments of labour in their hands, finely illustrates the good effects of a trust in God; and the success which accompanies a reliance on

⁷ Blair's Chronology.

⁸ The last act of Nehemiah's reformation took place under the priesthood of Joiada, (for the original of chap. xiii. 28. will not admit a construction which should represent Eliashib as the high-priest); and Joiada succeeded to the priesthood, A.M. 3591.

⁹ Prideaux dates the period of the seven weeks from the seventh year of Artaxerxes, an. A.C. 458; when Ezra was commissioned by a decree to rebuild the temple, and to restore Jerusalem; from that time, to the Reformation effected by Nehemiah, were forty-nine years, when the Church and State were re-established in the fifteenth year of Darius Nothus. Vid. Dan. ix. 25. Prid. Con. an. ant. c. 409. Part i. book vi. p. 325.

that Divine word, which had foreshown by the prophet Daniel, that the wall should be rebuilt in troublous times, and had predicted by Zechariah, that the streets should be repeopled by its young and old¹.

Nehemiah was the son of Hachaliah; and according to tradition, of the tribe of Judah², though it has been surmised, from an apocryphal account of his offering sacrifices at the head of the priests, that he was of the tribe of Levi³. He appears to have been a different person from the Nehemiah mentioned by Ezra⁴, and in this book, as one who returned from the captivity with Zerubbabel; since from the first year of Cyrus to the twentieth of Artaxerxes Longimanus, no fewer than ninety-one years intervene; so that Nehemiah must, on the supposition that they were the same persons, have been at this time much above an hundred years old; at which age it can hardly be thought⁵ probable, that he should have taken a journey from Shushan to Jerusalem; and have been capable of a government of twelve years, and of all those active exertions, which he is afterwards described to have made. Nehemiah, however, the author of this book, appears to have been born at Babylon; and was so distinguished for his family and qualities, as to be selected for the office of cup-bearer to the King: a situation of great honour and emolument in the Persian court. He bore the title of Tirshatha, which was in

¹ Dan. ix. 25. Zach. viii. 4, 5.

² R. Abarb. in Cabal. Euseb. Chron. Can. A. 1584. Isidore, Geneb, &c.

³ 2 Macc. i. 18. and following verses.

⁴ Ezra ii. 1. Nehem. vii. 7.

⁵ Michael. Præf. in Nehem.

general appropriated to the King's deputies and governors⁶. By the privilege of daily attendance on the King, he had constant opportunities of conciliating his favour; and was enabled, by wealth derived from the royal bounty, to support his government with great magnificence at his own private charge, and generously to relieve his people from the burden of an expense which they had necessarily sustained under preceding governors⁷. In every other respect, likewise, he displayed the most exemplary and disinterested zeal for the prosperity of his country⁸. If Nehemiah were not absolutely a prophet, he professes himself to have acted under the authority and guidance of God⁹. He seems to have conspired with Ezra in all his pious designs; and probably assisted him in the revisal of the canon¹. The Jews report him to have been one of the great synagogue. The author of the second Book of Maccabees attributes to him writings which², if they ever existed, are no longer extant.

After a continuance of twelve years³ in the government of Judæa, Nehemiah appears to have returned to Shushan, agreeably to his promise⁴. What length of time he continued in Persia cannot be ascertained. Prideaux, to allow a sufficient interval for the corruptions that took place during his absence, supposes at

⁶ Neh. viii. 9. x. 1. and Michael. in Loc.

⁷ Neh. v. 14. 18. His name signified consolation.

⁸ Ecclus. xlix. 13. ⁹ Neh. ii. 8. 18. ¹ 2 Macc. ii. 13.

² 2 Macc. ii. 13. Vid. Carpz. Introd. ad lib. Hist. Vet. Test. p. 343. Frischmuth's Diss. de non sperand. Restitut. Arcæ Fœder. iii. cap. x.

³ Chap. xiii. 6.

⁴ Nehem. ii. 6.

least five years ; the text only says "certain days⁵," from which expression nothing definite can be collected. It is probable that he soon obtained permission to return to his country, where he appears to have ended his life. It is not possible to determine how long he survived his return. Many learned writers conceiving that Jaddua and Darius, mentioned in the twenty-second verse of the twelfth chapter of this book must have been the high-priest Jaddua and Darius Codomannus, who was contemporary with him during his priesthood⁶, and who did not begin to reign till 110 years after the date of Nehemiah's commission ; have remarked that he must have lived an extraordinary length of time to have inserted this account ; and, indeed, though it is by no means incredible that Nehemiah might have been permitted to live 130 or 140 years, because his eminent virtues were highly conducive to the restoration of the prosperity of his country ; yet it has been thought by some more probable that the whole, or at least the latter part of the register contained in the twenty-six first verses of the

⁵ Nehem. xiii. 6. In the Hebrew it is "at the end of days," which means, perhaps, at the end of the year.

⁶ Some have imagined that Darius the Persian might have been Darius Nothus ; but the only Darius who was contemporary with the priesthood of Jaddua was Darius Codomannus ; and the text enumerating the succession of the high-priests, evidently speaks of Jaddua as high-priest, who did not enter on his office, till A. M. 3663 ; and, therefore, the verse must have been written above 100 years after Nehemiah went up from Babylon, when we cannot suppose him to have been less than 120 or 130 years of age. The text would even lead us to suppose that it was written after the death of Jaddua ; which would tend still farther to convince us that the

twelfth chapter was a subsequent addition⁷, made by those who superintended the canon; that is, by some members of the great synagogue; the whole detail being judged to be an unconnected and foreign interpolation.

Nehemiah frequently in this book calls upon God not to wipe out the good deeds that he had done; rather in pious supplication to be remembered on their account⁸, than in any arrogance of heart. To have concealed the actions of his government, would have been inconsistent with the office of a faithful historian; and have deprived posterity of an excellent example. The sacred writers, conscious of their own dignity, and looking only to truth, are alike superior to disguise or vanity. They record their own virtues and their own failings with equal sincerity.

Nehemiah appears to have been the last governor delegated by the Persian kings; who probably, after his death, left the government of Judæa to the high-priest of the Jews, till the Persian empire was destroyed by Alexander the Great⁹. Little or no information can be collected from the sacred writers concerning the state of the Jews, from this time till the commencement of the period at which the Gospel dispensation

passage is a subsequent interpolation. Josephus supposes Sanballat to have lived at the time of Alexander the Great; but the historian must have meant a different person from Sanballat the Horonite, who opposed Nehemiah: or he must have been mistaken. Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. viii. p. 502. Prid. anno ante Christ. 459. Part i. book v. p. 239, &c.

⁷ Vossius. Chron. Sac. c. 10. p. 149. Prid. Con. anno ante Christ. 458.

⁸ Chap. v. 19. xiii. 14. 22. 31.

⁹ Cornel. Bertram, de Rep. Jud. p. 168. 173. 175.

was promulgated. They were engaged in contests with the Egyptians and other neighbouring people, and in commerce with the Greeks at the times when their distinguished authors flourished. This intercourse led to an acquaintance with the Greek language in Judæa, which at length became a province of the Roman empire; so that numberless particulars with respect to the condition and circumstances of the Jewish people, may be collected from profane authors.

OF THE

BOOK OF ESTHER.

THIS Book is, in the Hebrew, styled “the volume of Esther:” it was received into the Jewish canon with peculiar veneration; and esteemed above many of the prophetic books, probably because therein are described the origin and ceremonies of the feast of Purim. It is called the Book of Esther¹, as it contains the history of this Jewish captive, who by her remarkable accomplishments, gained the affections of Ahasuerus; and by a marriage with him, was raised to the throne of Persia. The author of the book is not certainly known. Some of the fathers² suppose it to have been written by Ezra; others contend that it was composed by Joachim, high-priest of the Jews, and grandson of

¹ The word Esther is of Persian derivation, *Starith*, *Astram*, *Ἑστέρα*; its signification is uncertain. The vowel is prefixed for softness, according to the Hebrew idiom. Vid. Castel. in *Lexico Heptaglotton Persico*, col. 329, and Pfeiffer in *Dub. Vex.* p. 458. The original word was descriptive, and signified Dark, which was deemed beautiful by the Jews. *Hilar. OEcon.* p. 621. *Theocrit. Idyl.* x. 26—29. Esther was called by her own family *Hadassah*, which implies a myrtle. Vid. *Targum*, ad chap. ii. 7.

² August. de *Civit. Dei*, lib. xviii. c. xxxvi. p. 519. tom. vi. edit. Paris, 1685. See also *Epiphan. de Ponder. et Mensur.* cap. iv. *Isidor. Orig.* lib. vi. cap. ii.

Josedech. The Talmudists attribute it to the joint labours of the great synagogue³, which succeeded Ezra in the superintendence of the canon of Scripture. The twentieth verse of the ninth chapter of the book has led others to believe that Mordecai was the author⁴; but what is there related to have been written by him, seems only to refer to the circular letter which he distributed⁵. There are, lastly, other writers who maintain, that the book was the production of Esther's and Mordecai's united industry⁶; and probably they might have communicated an account of events so interesting to the whole nation, to the great synagogue at Jerusalem; some of the members of which may with great reason be supposed to have digested the information thus received into its present form⁷. We have, however, no sufficient evidence to determine, nor is it, perhaps, of much importance to ascertain precisely who was the author; but that it was a genuine and faithful description of what did actually happen is certain; not only from its admission into the canon, but also from the institution of the feast of Purim, which, from its first establishment, has been regularly observed as an annual solemnity⁸; on the fourteenth and fif-

³ Bava Bathra, cap. 1. f. 15.

⁴ As most of the Latin fathers, and Clemens Alexandrinus among the Greeks, Strom. lib. i. p. 392. Vid. also, Elias in Mass. Aben-Ezra, Abrah. Hispan. &c.

⁵ Chap. ix. 20. 23. 26.

⁶ Chap. ix. 29.

⁷ Huet. Demonstrat. Evang. Prop. iv. p. 174.

⁸ 2 Macc. xv. 36, 37. Codex. Theod. Tit. viii. de Judæis, &c. tom. vi. p. 233. edit. Lugdun. 1665. The feast is called also the feast of Haman and Mordecai. The month Adar corresponds with our February and March. Esther and Mordecai appear to have ordained only a feast: but the Jews observe, as they profess long to

teenth days of the month Adar, in commemoration of the great deliverance which Esther, by her interest, had procured; and which is even now celebrated among the Jews with many peculiar ceremonies, and with “drinking of wine even to excess⁹.” This festival was called Purim, or the feast of lots (Pur, in the Hebrew and Persian language, signifying a lot), from the events mentioned in chap. iii. 7. ix. 24.

The Jews¹ maintain that this book was unquestionably inspired by the Holy Ghost; and that though all the books of the Prophets, and of the Hagiographi shall be destroyed at the coming of the Messiah, that of Esther shall continue with those of Moses, for Esther had said, that “the days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews².” This is meant, however, only of that part of the book which our church considers as canonical; for the six chapters, which are only in the Greek and Latin copies, were never received by the Jews; and they are rejected as apocryphal by us, in conformity to the sentiments of the ancient church, for this and other reasons which will be hereafter assigned³. It is to be lamented, indeed, that the spurious chapters should ever have been annexed to the authentic part, since they have tended to bring discredit on the sacred

have done, a fast on the 13th, which was the day destined for their extirpation. Joseph. Antiq. lib. ix. c. vi. p. 449. Christian Mag. vol. iv. p. 260. Prid. Con. ann. 452. pt. i. book v. Buxtorf. Synag. Jud. c. xxiv. p. 429. edit. Hanov. 1604. Calmet, Dict. word Purim. Vide Tractat. Critic. Purim, referente W. Shikart, tom. viii. p. 482, 3. edit. Londin. 1660.

⁹ Vide Calmet.

¹ Maimon. More Nevoch. par. ii. c. xlv. p. 317. edit. Buxtorf.

² Chap. ix. 28. Pfeiffer. Thesaur. Hermeneut. p. 599.

³ Preface to the apocryphal chapters of Esther.

book; and it has been supposed that a disrespect for the apocryphal additions induced some ancient writers to leave the work out of the catalogue of the canonical books⁴; and occasioned Luther to express a wish that it might be expunged from the list⁵. These, however, being rescinded, the remainder is entitled to our reverence as canonical. It is established by the suffrage of antiquity, and bears every mark of authenticity and truth⁶.

There has been much difference of opinion concerning the period which we should assign to the events recorded in this book. It is certain, from many instances, that the Jews distinguished foreign persons by names different from those which they bear in profane history⁷; as, indeed, all nations are accustomed to corrupt proper names in conformity to the genius and pronunciation of their own language. Scaliger, upon many considerations, contends that Ahasuerus was the same with Xerxes⁸; whose queen, Amestris, he conceives, might have been Esther. Some have imagined

⁴ Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. xxvi. Athan. Oper. p. 55. tom. ii. edit. Par. 1627. Gregor. Nazianz. de Ver. et German. Script. tom. ii. p. 98. edit. Par. 1630. Some think that Esther was included in these catalogues, under the Book of Ezra, as it was supposed to have been written by Ezra. It was in the catalogues of Origen, Cyril, Hilary, Epiphanius, and Jerom, and in that of the council of Laodicea. Vid. infra, Pref. to Apocryph. chapters of Esther. Note.

⁵ Conviv. Serm. f. 494. and Lib. de Serv. Arbit. tom. iii. f. 82.

⁶ Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. vi. c. xxv. p. 226. edit. Paris, 1659. Hilar. Prolog. in Lib. Psalm. p. 9. edit. Paris, 1693.

⁷ Vitringa Observat. Sacr. vol. i. c. iv. p. 49. edit. Amstel. 1727.

⁸ Scaliger de Emendat. Temp. lib. vi. p. 284. Edit. Colon. Allob. 1629. Grotius, Michaelis, &c. Capellus places the history so late as the time of Ochus, who was the successor of Artaxerxes Mnemon.

that Ahasuerus was Cyaxares; and others assert that he was Cambyses⁹. Usher supposes, that by Ahasuerus we are to understand Darius Hystaspes¹, who resided at Susa, and whose extent of dominion and actions corresponded with the accounts of this book. But to each of these opinions considerable objections may be made, from the accounts of profane historians²; and probably the persuasion of Prideaux is best supported, who maintains, agreeably to the account of Josephus³; of the Septuagint; and of the apocryphal additions to the Book of Esther, that Ahasuerus was Artaxerxes Longimanus⁴; whose extraordinary favour to the Jews might in some measure arise from the influence of Esther. The history, therefore, may be supposed to have commenced about A.M. 3544⁵, and it contains an

⁹ Targ. R. Salomon, Seder Olam Rabba, p. 86.

¹ Usseri Annal. Vet. Test. Period. Jul. an. 4193. Du Pin, Maius Œcon. V. T. p. 1073. The advocates for this opinion maintain, with the Rabbinical writers, that Esther was the Artystona of Darius; but Artystona was the daughter of Cyrus; and the history of Atossa by no means accords, any more than does that of Parmis, with the account here given of Vashti. Vid. Herod. lib. iii. p. 246. lib. vii. p. 506. edit. Wesselin.

² Universal Hist. of Persia, book 1. and Hist. of Jews, book 2. lib. xi.

³ Joseph. Ant. lib. xi. c. vi.

⁴ Prid. Con. an. 470. Sulpit. Sever. Hist. Sac. lib. ii. p. 307. Calmet, Dict. word Vashti. Lightfoot, vol. i. p. 137. The chief objection to the period of Artaxerxes Longimanus is drawn from Esther ii. 5, 6. but that passage may imply, that Kish was carried away captive with Jeconiah; or that Mordecai was a descendant of some one of Nebuchadnezzar's captives.

⁵ Scaliger de Emend. Temp. lib. vi. p. 595—8. Auctor Eccles. Goth. p. 319.

account of a period which extends from ten to twenty years.

The book describes the advancement of Esther ; who, by the interest which she conciliated with Ahasuerus, delivered the Jews from a great destruction which had been contrived for them by Haman, an insolent favourite of the king. It presents an interesting description of mortified pride, and of malice baffled to the ruin of its contrivers. It likewise exhibits a very animated representation of the vexations and troubles, of the anxieties, treachery, and dissimulation of a corrupt court. The vicissitudes and characters are displayed with dramatic effect. The author seems to have been so intimately acquainted with the Persian customs, that some have conceived a notion that he transcribed his work from Persian chronicles ⁶. It has been remarked, that the name of God is not mentioned throughout the book ; his superintendent providence is, however, frequently illustrated ; it is shown, indeed, in every part of the work ; disconcerting evil designs, and producing great events by means seemingly inadequate. The descriptions which it contains of the eastern court exhibit a remarkable consistency with the representations of heathen authors ; we perceive in them the exact fidelity of a contemporary writer ; and the animated piety with which the historian details the operations of the divine

⁶ Hottinger. Thesaur. Philog. lib. ii. ch. i. p. 488. Aben-Ezra, Commentary in Procem. It is to be observed, that the decree which was issued in favour of the Jews did not repeal the former decree, because the laws of the Medes and Persians could not be changed, but it empowered them to defend themselves, see chap. i. 19. viii. 8. and Daniel vi. 8. Huetius, Selden, &c.

counsels in defeating the machinations of the wicked, and in delivering his faithful servants from destruction, is shown with singular impression and effect.

Calmet asserts, on the authority of Paul Lucas, that the tombs of Mordecai and Esther were still shown at Hamadan or Ecbatana in Persia, in the synagogue of the Jews, who at that time were numerous there.

OF THE
BOOK OF JOB.

CONCERNING the nature, and author of this Book, various opinions have been entertained. Some, as well Christian as Rabbinical writers, have ventured to consider it as a relation of the parabolical kind, without any historical foundation¹; and others as a dramatic work, grounded on some traditional accounts of a real personage; or as an allegory, in which, under real characters and circumstances, are shadowed out the Jewish nation, and some particulars of the Jewish history during² or after the Babylonish captivity³. But to

¹ Bava Bathra, Anabaptists, &c.

² Garnett taking some notions of Warburton, has etched out an ingenious allegory, in which the condition of Job is considered as descriptive of the Jewish sufferings during the captivity. But though he has strained every circumstance in the history in order to accommodate his theory to this representation, he has produced no conviction. A lively fancy may readily discover such resemblances as he has pointed out; but if the judgment be allowed to reflect, it will suggest unanswerable objections to the scheme, however specious it may be. Vid. Garnett's Dissert. on Job. The Use and Intent of Prophecy, Diss. II. Maimon. More Nevoch, p. 3. c. xxii. Bava Bathra, c. i. fol. 15. Sentimens de quelq. Theolog. Holland. p. 184. Grotius Com. in Job, lib. i. Le Clerc, &c.

³ Warburton imagined, that Job was intended to personate the Jewish people on their return from the captivity; that by his three friends were meant the three great enemies of the Jews: Sanballat,

indulge in such unauthorised fancies is very dangerous, and inconsistent with the respect due to sacred writ : in the present instance there is no sufficient foundation for supposing that the book is any other than a literal history of the temptation and sufferings of an actual personage⁴; since it has every external sanction of authority, and is stamped with every intrinsic mark that can characterize a genuine relation.

Of the real existence of Job no reasonable doubt can be entertained, if we consider that it is affirmed by the concurrent testimony of all eastern tradition ; that the whole history of this illustrious character, with many fabulous additions, was known among the Syrians and Chaldæans ; that many of the noblest families among the Arabians are distinguished by his name⁵, and boast of being descended from him ; and lastly, that Job is mentioned as a real character by Ezekiel⁶ and St. James⁷.

Tobiah, and Geshem ; and by Job's wife, the idolatrous wives whom some of the Jews had married, as we learn from Nehemiah : a strange conceit, of which the improbabilities are by no means glossed over by the elaborate reasoning, and extravagant assertions of the learned writer. Vid. Peter's Dissert. on Job. Divine Legation, vol. iii. b. vi. § 2.

⁴ Spanheim Hist. Job. Schultens Com. in Job, and Commentators in general.

⁵ As was Zalach Eddin, usually styled Saladin, sultan of the Mamelukes ; who bore the name of Job, as did likewise his father. Vid. Elmacin. Historia Saracenica. The authority of Aristotle and other ancient writers, have been produced also to prove the real existence of Job. There are even now traditionary accounts concerning the place of Job's abode. Vid. Thevenot's Voyage, p. 447. Le Roque Voyages de Syrie, tom. i. p. 239.

⁶ Ezek. xiv. 14.

⁷ James v. 11. Vid. also Tobit ii. 12. 15. in Vulgate. Clemen.

The book of Job bears every appearance of a literal relation of actual events: this is evident from the style of the author; from his mode of introducing the subject; and also from the circumstantial detail of habitation, kindred, and condition, as well as from the names of the persons therein mentioned; which correspond with other accounts of that age and country, in which Job is generally supposed to have existed^s. The book then must be allowed to contain a literal history of real events; though, agreeably to the opinion of Grotius, the subject is poetically treated; for notwithstanding the first and last parts of the work, which are entirely narrative, are expressed in a style nearly as simple as that of the historical books of Samuel or of Kings, the rest resembles rather the poetical works of David and of Solomon.

Considering then that the work is in a great measure poetical, and that probably it was written in metre, we shall readily account for that want of order and arrangement, which, by the omission of trivial particulars, and by the neglect of distinction of times, occasionally

Epist. ad Cor. ch. xvii. and Arist. apud Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. vii. c. viii. p. 311. lib. ix. c. xxv. p. 430.

^s It has been said, that the names of Job and his friends have a mystical meaning; but most of the eastern names have some descriptive signification. Spanheim derives the name of Job from an Hebrew root, *יָבֵן*, *ἐπιποθεῖν*, amare, a word which imports love, or beloved. And this is more probable than the derivation sometimes given from a word expressive of grief; which, if accepted, must be supposed to have been applied after Job's misfortunes. Michaelis in his preface derives the name of Job from a word which signifies repentance, which was perhaps suggested by Mahomet, who refers to sacred and traditional accounts of Job. See Sale's Koran, vol. ii. c. xxxviii. p. 322. also ch. xxi. p. 162.

gives an air of improbability to the book. Many circumstances, which must have occurred at intervals, are related in a continued and uninterrupted series by the author, intent only on delivering to posterity memorable events, and sublime instruction; and neglecting every particular not immediately conducive to this design⁹. It must likewise be observed, that the verity of the book is not invalidated by the allegorical manner in which some things are related. Human events are literally described; but the proceedings of Providence, of which we are unable to form any apprehension, unless from figurative illustration, are perhaps here, as in other parts of Scripture¹, parabolically represented under familiar allusions. Thus are "the sons of God," or the obedient angels, described as appearing before the presence of the Lord, as at the tribunal of an earthly judge; so also the discourse and agency of Satan are indirectly shadowed out, in a manner agreeable to the mode of human intercourse; in order to accommodate to our conceptions, what would otherwise be utterly unintelligible. The government of God, in permitting, and in restricting the temptations of the faithful, is not immediately referrible to our senses; though his justice and mercy may be obliquely intimated by familiar alle-

⁹ The calamities of Job succeeded each other with a miraculous rapidity. His friends might have literally observed seven days' silence in ashes, from respect to his affliction. The artificial regularity which the learned Michaelis conceives to exist in the numbers mentioned in this book, does not appear really to obtain; except that when Job's possessions are said to have been doubled, they are enumerated by an interesting periphrasis. Compare chap. i. 3. and xlii. 12.

¹ Gen. xxviii. 12. Isa. vi. 1 Kings xxii. 19—22. Zech. iii. 1. Rev. xii.

gory². The interlocutory parts of the book should be considered also as descriptive of real discourse, at least as to substance. They are conducted with every appearance of probability, and the passions of the speakers seem to kindle as they proceed. There is, also, no sufficient reason why we should not suppose God (whose decision of this important controversy had been earnestly desired³;) to have actually spoken by Himself or his angel out of the whirlwind⁴; though some writers have chosen to consider the introduction of the Deity as a prophetic vision, represented to Job and his friends in a trance. This account, then, of the suffering and restoration of Job, must be admitted as a real and authentic history; no where, perhaps, allegorical, except in those parts which revealed the agency of superior beings.

The origin of Job is uncertain⁵. There is an appendix annexed to the Greek, Arabic, and Vulgate versions of the book, said to be taken from the ancient Syriac, which represents Job to have been the son of Zerah, a descendant of Esau; and which relates that he reigned

² Le Clerc. in Loc. Codurc. Præf. in Job. Pfeiffer Dub. Vex. Cent. iii. loc. 31.

³ Chap. x. 2. xii. 5. xiii. 3. 21, 22. 24.

⁴ The Chaldee Paraphrast, taking the word whirlwind in a metaphorical sense, renders it improperly "out of the whirlwind of grief;" as if God had suggested to Job, amidst the conflict of his sorrows, the following thoughts. See 1 Kings xix. 11—13. a similar representation.

⁵ Sixt. Senen. Bib. lib. i. and a translation of this Appendix in Wall's Critical Notes. Vid. also Athan. Synops. Chrysost. de Patient. hom. ii. Aristæas, Philo, Polyhistor. Euseb. Præp. lib. ix. cap. xxv. p. 450. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. cap. xlvii. p. 530.

in the land of Ausis, upon the borders of Idumæa and Arabia; and upon this authority many ancient writers, and most of the fathers, concur in supposing that he was the same with Jobab, the son of Zerah, mentioned in Genesis ⁶; but as this addition is not found in the Hebrew copies it is considered as spurious; and the learned Spanheim has, upon very strong grounds, endeavoured to prove, that Job, who is the subject of this history, was a very different person from the son of Zerah; and derived his origin from Uz, the son of Nahor, brother to Abraham ⁷; or from Abraham himself, by Keturah ⁸. We may assent, likewise, to the opinion of Bishop Lowth, that Job dwelt in that part of Arabia Petræa which was called Edom ⁹, and bor-

⁶ Gen. xxxvi. 33. 1 Chron. i. 44. Spanheim in Job, ch. iv. Mercer. Pineda, &c. There is likewise in Greek a discourse of Job's wife, which is generally rejected as apocryphal. Vid. Origen. ad African. Hieron. Præf. in Dan. et in Job. et in Quest. Heb. in Gen. Chrysos. Polych. Olymp. Procem. et ad Caten. in Job. Some have imagined that Job's wife was Dinah, the daughter of Jacob. She is called Rachman by the Arabs; and is supposed by them to have been the daughter of Ephraim; or according to others, of Machir, the son of Manasseh. Vid. Sale's notes in Koran. She was probably of the country and religion of Job, though censured by him upon one occasion, as having spoken foolishly. Vid. Wesley's Dissert. XXVI.

⁷ Hieron. Quest. Hebr. in Gen. Spanheim, Hist. Job, cap. iv. Bochart, &c.

⁸ A family claiming descent from Abraham, called Beni Keturah, is reported still to exist at Bussor. See Wolffius.

⁹ Uz was Edom. Vid. Lament. iv. 21. Numb. xxxiv. 3. Josh xv. 12. Jerem. xxv. 20. Lowth's Præl. Poet. xxxii. and notes. Wesley's Diss. XXIX. Hodges conceives Job and his friends to have lived somewhere between Chaldæa and Judæa. Some place him in Arabia Deserta. Vitringa, Observat. Sacr. c. iv. p. 39. tom. i.

dered upon the tribe of Judah to the South: being situated between Egypt and the land of the Philistines: and we may suppose that his friends inhabited the country immediately adjacent.

Job does not appear to have been a sovereign¹, though styled the greatest man of the East, with respect to his possessions. He and his friends were, however, persons of considerable rank and importance, as may be collected from various circumstances incidentally mentioned in the course of his history. If they were not directly descended from Abraham, they must be classed among those, who, out of the family of Israel, worshipped God in sincerity and truth. The exact period in which they existed, cannot be determined. Without descending to minute enquiries on the subject², we may remark, that they appear to have lived some time during the servitude of the Israelites

edit. Amstel. 1727. All the country between Egypt and the Euphrates was called East, with respect to Egypt; and the Jews who there adopted the expression, afterwards used it absolutely without reference to their change of situation. Vid. Mede, fol. p. 467. and Matt. ii. 1. If Moses were the author of this part, he might, in Midian, which is to the West, properly call Edom the South.

¹ The crown mentioned in xix. 9. is only a figurative expression for prosperity. Job and his friends are in the Greek called sovereigns; that is, great men.

² Some Talmudists have asserted, that Job was born in the very year of Jacob's descent into Egypt, and that he died in the year of the Exodus; a conceit founded on a supposition, that as the camels and oxen were restored twofold to Job, so the years of his life were doubled; and that, as he lived 140 years after his affliction, he lived seventy years before it. Vid. Bava Bathra. The Rabbins suppose that Moses alludes to the death of Job when he says of the Gentiles, that "their defence is departed from them." Vid. Numb. xiv. 9.

in Egypt: and that the period of their history may be supposed to intervene between the death of Joseph and the departure from Egypt³; which includes a space of about 140 or 145 years; in which case Job might be six or seven generations removed from Nahor. And since he survived his restoration to prosperity 140 years, he may have lived at least during part of the time that the Israelites wandered in the wilderness⁴. As the age of man in that period did not usually exceed 200 or 220 years⁵, Job was probably overwhelmed in calamities in the prime and vigour of his life: when if possessed of the greatest fortitude to sustain his afflictions, he was also endued with the liveliest sensibility to feel them. How long his sufferings may have lasted is uncertain; the seven years for which some contend, would have been a longer period than can be admitted. It required not such a continuance of time to demonstrate his faith and unshaken confidence; and God delights not in unnecessary severity⁶. But from a consideration of particulars, it will be evident that less than a year cannot be assigned for the duration of his distress; and this is agreeable to the general Hebrew calculations.

In deciding upon the period which we ascribe to Job and his friends, we suppose them to have flourished before, or about the time of Moses; and the sentiments and religious opinions which are maintained in their

³ Spanheim Hist. Job, cap. vi. p. 106.

⁴ Grot. Præf. Diodat. Argum. in Job.

⁵ Few of Job's supposed contemporaries lived to so great a length of years; but Job was blessed with a long life. He is by some stated to have died about A.M. 2449.

⁶ Lament. ii. 33.

discourse, are in general such as were consistent with the information that obtained before the Mosaic dispensation⁷. Job appears to have worshipped God in the manner of the Patriarchs, before the priesthood was confined to Aaron; and in the detail of his piety, he affords a transcript of those primitive principles which he might have derived from Abraham and Nahor. He and his friends seem to have been acquainted with the precepts of traditional religion⁸, as collected from occasional revelations to the Patriarchs; together with the deductions of that conscience which was "a Law to the Gentiles⁹." But it must also be observed, that they sometimes displayed a greater knowledge of important truths than was consistent with the general notions that must have prevailed in their time. All of Abraham's descendants, indeed, who were contemporary with Job, may be supposed to have been acquainted with the attributes of God; and with the use of sacrifice¹. They might, from tradition, have collected some knowledge of the fall of Angels²; of the creation from the dust by the breath of the Almighty³; of original sin and its effects⁴; of the flood⁵; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah⁶; and even of a promised Messiah⁷. Yet still there will

⁷ When Elihu reckons up the modes of revelation, he takes no account of the Mosaic.

⁸ Peter's Critical Dissert. on Job, p. 151.

⁹ Rom. ii. 14. and Tertull. cap. ii.

¹ Chap. xlii. 8. ² Chap. iv. 18. ³ Chap. xxxiii. 4.

⁴ Chap. xii. 16. xiv. 4. xv. 14. xxv. 4. xxvi. 13. xxxi. 33. x. 9. compare with Gen. iii. 19.

⁵ Chap. xxii. 15, 16.

⁶ Chap. xxii. 20.

⁷ Chap. xix. 25. xxxiii. 23—30.

remain some particulars of which they were apprized, that appear to be above the general information which the Gentiles possessed; and, therefore, we may assent to an opinion which is maintained by many, both Jewish and Christian writers⁸, that Job and his friends were enlightened by a prophetic spirit: as certainly some few persons among the Gentiles were⁹; and the conviction that Job was to be considered as a patriarchal prophet, was probably the inducement, which influenced the Jews to admit his work into the canon of their scripture, if we suppose it to have been written by himself; and not to have been compiled by an inspired author of their own nation.

Job and his friends were unquestionably distinguished by extraordinary marks of God's countenance; and we are authorized by the book to consider them as sometimes favoured by divine revelations. Eliphaz received instruction "from the visions of the night¹," and heard the voice of a spirit in secret whispers, like the "still small voice" which Elijah heard². Elihu also felt a Divine power³;" but Job himself appears to have been

⁸ Patrick's Appendix to his Paraphrase. Job is styled by St. Augustin "Eximius Prophetarum."

⁹ As Balaam, whom the Jews conceived to have been the same person with Elihu.

¹ Job iv. 13. 16. Hence R. Sol. Jarchi was led to remark, that the Shechinah was upon Eliphaz.

² 1 Kings xix. 12.

³ Chap. xxxiii. 8. 18. xxxiii. 15, 16. The name of Elihu, which signifies, "He is my God," and other circumstances, have led some writers to consider him as a representative of the Messiah; Elihu is not censured as Job's three friends are, chap. xlii. 7—9. In chap. xl. 4, 5, and in chap. xlii. 1. 6. Job seems to plead guilty to what Elihu had objected to him. See chap. xxiii. 9, 10; xxxiv. 5, 6.

invested with peculiar dignity ; and to have possessed pre-eminent claims to be regarded as a Gentile prophet. God spoke to him “ out of the whirlwind ⁴ ;” and it has been supposed, from the fifth verse of the forty-second chapter, that he beheld the manifestation of the Divine presence, possibly, in a glorious cloud, for so the Seventy understood it. He undoubtedly, in many places, speaks by the suggestion of the Holy Spirit ; and expresses himself concerning the doctrine of gratuitous justification ⁵, and of a future state, with a clearness and information that were evidently the result of prophetic apprehension. We cannot, indeed, attribute the precise and emphatic declaration contained in the nineteenth chapter, to anything but to the effect of immediate revelation from God ; and must, agreeably to the opinion of the most judicious writers, ancient and modern, consider it as an evident profession of faith in a Redeemer ⁶, and of entire confidence in a resurrection and future judgment ⁷.

In chap. xxxiii. 23, 24. Elihu also speaks in a remarkable manner with respect to a messenger or teacher.

⁴ So the Spirit descended on the apostles at the feast of Pentecost, “ suddenly with a rushing mighty wind.” Acts ii. 2.

⁵ Chap. ix. 2, 3. xiv. 4. xxv. 4. Hodge’s inquiry into the design of the Book of Job.

⁶ It is not necessary, from this expression, to conclude that the whole mystery of the redemption was revealed to Job ; but only that he entertained a consolatory assurance of some future personage, who should appear to deliver mankind from the curse of Adam, and to judge the world in righteousness

⁷ Chap. xix. 25—29. Some commentators, it is true, consider this passage as expressive of Job’s confidence only in a present restoration ; which is to restrict the expressions, in a most unauthorized manner, and to interpret Scripture upon preconceived notions. Patrick supposes this temporal restoration to be typical of a future

Having observed thus much with respect to the period in which Job may be supposed to have lived, it

resurrection. He professes to follow St. Jerom's authority; but in the place alluded to, St. Jerom (or the author of the commentaries under his name) does not confine the words to a figurative prediction. He says, absolutely, that Job in this passage, "*resurrectionem futuram prophetat in spiritu,*" prophecies in the spirit the future resurrection. And though, in other places, St. Jerom admits, with all writers, a double sense of Scripture, it by no means follows that he does so in this place; where, indeed, only a single sense could be intended, for Job had uniformly declared his despondence as to the present life. St. Jerom, likewise, in his Epistle to Paulinus, affirms, that Job here prophesies the resurrection of the body in terms as clear and exact as ever were used. "*Resurrectionem corporum sic prophetat ut nullus de eâ, vel manifestius, vel cautius scripserit.*" Epist. 50. 2. ad Paulinum, p. 572. Vid. also, Epist. 38. ad Pammach. p. 324. vol. iv. edit. Paris, 1706. This remarkable passage is supposed by the Jews to relate to the restoration of happiness in a future life; and certainly it contains a manifest and direct prophecy of the future resurrection of the body, and of the coming of Christ to judge the earth; as the solemnity of the introduction, the tenor of Job's discourse worked up to its highest pitch, the replies of his friends, and every expression (as faithfully translated in our Bible) demonstrate. We cannot restrict the prophecy to a confidence in a temporal restoration, without abrogating the obvious sense of the words; and without considering them as utterly extravagant and unmeaning. Wherefore should "they be graven with an iron pen, and with lead, in the rock for ever?" How, "after worms should have destroyed his body," could Job "see God in the flesh," except in a future life? Why, lastly, did he mention that his "Redeemer should stand at the latter day upon the earth," and that "his own eyes should behold him," unless to declare his assurance of a future resurrection and judgment? To the unexampled misery of Job, and through him to the rest of mankind, in a work to be admitted into the canon of Scripture, God might vouchsafe the first explicit revelation of a future retributive judgment; and the first distinct view of a spiritual Redeemer. See xiii. 15. and Peters's Critic. Dissert. on Job.

may with more facility be considered at what time, and by whom his history should seem likely to have been written. Upon this subject, it is not necessary to enter into an examination of the various arguments produced by different authors, in support of their several opinions; but it may be observed, that some have conceived the book to be the production of Job⁸ himself; or of Elihu⁹; while many have attributed it to Moses¹; and others to later prophets, as to Solomon²; and to Isaiah³. The most probable opinion is, that it was composed from such memorials as Job himself, or his friends, might have left in the Syriac or Arabic language. The work is written in a style agreeable to the genius of the Arabic language. It is sublime, lofty, compressed, and full of figures and allusive images. It contains, likewise, much of that profound philosophy, and elevated turn of thought, for which the Arabians were as remarkable⁴, as for the dignity and allegorical cast of their language. It may be added, likewise, that

⁸ Origen, cont. Cels. lib. vi. et Anonymi, in Job, lib. prim. apud Origen, tom. ii. p. 851. edit. Par. 1733. Gregor. Mag. in Job, lib. i. cap. i. p. 15. edit. Antverp. 1515. Suidas in Job, Isidor. Hisp. Sixt. Senens. Hottinger, Walton, Bochart, Huetius, &c.

⁹ Lightfoot supposes Elihu to have been the author, because, in the beginning of his discourse, he appears to speak in that character; but he is only introduced, as are the other friends, in the first person, for the sake of ornament. Chap. xxxii. 14, &c.

¹ Bava Bathra, cap. 1. f. 15. Kimchi, Methodius apud Photium. R. Levi Ben. Gerson in Præf. Aben-Ezra ad cap. ii. 11. Huet. Demonst. Evan. Prop. iv. in Job, p. 177. Epist. ad Paul, p. 572.

² As did Gregory Nazianzen, Luther, &c. Huet. Prop. iv. Orat. ad Exæquat. Harduin in Chron. V. Test.

³ Philo Codercus. Præf. in Job. Scaliger. Grotius. Le Clerc. Warburton attributes it to Ezra; and Garnett to Ezekiel.

⁴ 1 Kings iv. 30. Jerem. xlix. 7. Obad. ver. viii. Baruch iii. 13.

some of the images and remarks in this book appear to have been drawn from circumstances peculiar and appropriate to Arabia ⁵; and that it has every characteristic of the most venerable antiquity, and all the appearance of an original patriarchal work ⁶.

That the book is drawn up in a poetical form, and adorned with poetical embellishments, is no proof that it was not written in great part by Job; for though it be inconsistent with the violence of outrageous passion, or the freedom of animated dialogue, to speak in numbers, or measured language; yet there is no reason why Job may not be supposed to have amused himself, when restored to ease and prosperity, by recollecting the circumstances of his affliction; and to have described them with metrical arrangement; it being customary in the earlier ages to compose the

⁵ Chap. vi. 15—17. xxxvii. 9. 22. Vid. also, chap. ix. 26. where Schultens translates the word אֲנִיתָ, by “naves papyro vel arundine textas;” and supposes it to signify those vessels made of cane, or the papyrus, that were used on the Nile. Vid. Lucan. lib. iv. 1. 135, 136.

⁶ Grey's Pref. to Job. Origen cont. Cels. lib. vi. § 41. p. 665. Edit. Paris, 1733. Euseb. and Selden de jur. nat. et gent. lib. iii. p. 349. See also, lib. vii. cap. xi. p. 747—50. Hottinger Smegma Orient. Job mentions only the most ancient species of idolatry, the worship of the sun and moon. Vid. chap. xxxi. 26, 27. and the most ancient kind of writing, by sculpture. His riches are reckoned by his cattle: and it is by no means clear, that the word *Kesitah*, translated a piece of money, chap. xliii. 11. does not mean a *lamb*. Vid. Spanheim, and Calmet in Gen. xxxiii. 19. Or, if it mean money, there is no reason to suppose that it might not be in use in the time and country assigned to Job. Compare also, chap. xlii. 8. with Numb. xxiii. 1. Bp. Lowth considers the style as bearing evident marks of the most remote antiquity. Vid. Prælect. 32.

most important works in some kind of measure⁷. It is consistent, also, with our notions of inspiration, to suppose that its suggestions might be conveyed in the captivating dress of poetry.

How far Job reduced the work towards its present form, cannot be determined; it is contended only, that he left sufficient materials for some Hebrew writer to digest it as it now appears. As the Hebrew and Arabic language are derived from the same origin, both being deduced from Abraham's descendants, among whom the Hebrew was preserved, and the Arabic originated, they may well be supposed to approximate towards their source, and to have much resembled each other; as, indeed, they now do, with great affinity⁸. It is, therefore, possible that Job might have written the book in the language in which it now exists⁹; the last verses only being added by some prophet, who received it into the Jewish canon¹. But if we conceive that

⁷ Isidore Orig. lib. i. 27.

⁸ Hunt's *Clavis Pentateuchi*.

⁹ All the descendants of Abraham, the Israelites, Idumæans, and Arabs, probably continued long to use the same language, till separation and gradual innovations produced a change. The names of Ishmael's, Keturah's, Esau's, and Job's families, are pure Hebrew. See Sir William Jones's eighth Anniversary Discourse, in vol. iii. of *Asiatic Researches*.

¹ It is uncertain when the book was received into the canon. Some think that it was admitted with Solomon's writings by the men of Hezekiah: but probably it was inserted much earlier. In the Hebrew, it follows immediately after the Proverbs; but in the Septuagint, and by St. Jerom, it was placed as in our Bibles. Peters suggests, that it might have been presented to Solomon by the queen of Sheba: and Wesley, on a conjecture as slender, fancies that it might have been procured by Elimelech and Naomi, when in Moab, which was in Idumæa, and near the spot where he conceives Job to

the Hebrew language differed so much from the Arabic, in the time of Job, that what he wrote must have been translated for the use of the Hebrews, we may suppose it to have been effected by some inspired writer among the Hebrews; who retained those Syriac and Arabic expressions which are interspersed through the work, as appropriate ornaments of the history, and as tending, perhaps, to facilitate the versification. Some critics, indeed, consider these expressions as foreign corruptions introduced into the Jewish language after the captivity; and therefore imagine that the work must have been composed after those of David and Solomon; but what they consider as Chaldaisms, are by others, with more probability, represented to be only Syriac and Arabic expressions².

The book then was probably either written by Job, or composed from materials which he left, by some writer who lived soon after the period of the history herein described. They who dispute this antiquity maintain, that besides the pretended Chaldaisms which have been before observed rather to have been Arabic and Syriac expressions, they discover some passages in the book which are imitations of particulars in the works of David and of Solomon; but if the coincidences produced in support of this assertion be not accidental, they do not prove that the passages were

have lived. It was, however, doubtless received before the time of Ezekiel. Vid. Ezek. xiv. 14. Mercerus, in proverbias.

² Schultens. Grey's Job, p. 12. It has been disputed whether the names of Job's daughters are of Hebrew or Arabic extraction. But as both languages have the same root, the dispute is idle. The word Jehovah, which was known only to the Jews, might have been applied to the Deity by the compiler or translator.

copied by Job ; since there is equal reason to suppose that David and Solomon might have borrowed from him, as other prophets certainly did ³ · such imitations of expressions for the communication of similar sentiments being customary among the sacred writers.

If, however, we admit, as some have contended, that the book contains allusions to the Mosaic laws, and also to circumstances and events of the Jewish history ; and that these allusions are not merely such as refer to particulars with which Job might have been acquainted ⁴, if contemporary with the servitude of the Israelites in Egypt, or with their sojourning in the wilderness ; nor consist in expressions which Moses, if the compiler or translator of the book, might have introduced ⁵, supposing him to have written it after the delivery of the

³ Huetius, Prop. iv. passim.

⁴ The sentiments in chap. xvii. 5. xxi. 19. xxii. 6. xxiv. 7. 9, 10. and xxxi. 9, 10. 28. produced by Warburton, and others, as allusions to the law, which escaped the author, might surely be general remarks. All the supposed references to the flood, and other particulars described in Genesis, only prove that Job was acquainted with those traditions which the descendants of Abraham must have known, without the Mosaic account. Job, if we place him a little later, might have heard, likewise, of the miracles in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, if we suppose him to allude to them in chap. xxxviii. 15. ix. 7, 8. xii. 15. xxvi. 12. as likewise of the wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness, and of some other contemporary events, at which he is imagined (though perhaps without sufficient reason) to hint. Vid. chap. xii. 24. xxxi. 24. xxix. 25. The passage which has been thought to allude to the sun standing still (compare ix. 7. with Joshua x. 12.) is not so distinct as to authorise any positive conclusion.

⁵ The expressions in chap. xx. 17. xxii. 22. xxix. 14. xv. 17, 18. might be general, or introduced by Moses. The nineteenth verse of the fifteenth chapter may apply to Noah and his sons. Vid. Peters's Dissert. on Job, part i. § 2.

law; such allusions, though they cannot be allowed to invalidate the antiquity which is here attributed to Job himself, or to disprove that he might have furnished the chief materials for the work, certainly will prove that it was composed in its present form, long after the period in which the history must have occurred; and that it was written or translated by an author later than Moses. As a matter of opinion, however, it may be observed, that no such allusions do appear as should influence us to reject the pretensions of Job, or of Moses⁶; none certainly that should incline us to believe that the book was not written long before the captivity⁷; since of the alleged allusions to the regal history of the Jews, none are so evident as to justify any conclusion to the contrary; and there appears, in-

⁶ Huet. Prop. iv. in Job.

⁷ The passage in chap. xxxiii. 15—26. has been imagined to be descriptive of God's proceedings with Hezekiah, 2 Kings xx. 2 Chron. xxxii. as that in chap. xxxv. 8. 12. has been supposed to coincide with the account of the punishment of Manasseh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11—13. So, likewise, the denunciation in chap. xxxiv. 20. has been represented as allusive to the sudden destruction of Sennacherib's army, 2 Kings xix. 35. But these passages of Job contain only general descriptions of God's judgments, that might easily be drawn to apply to any instance; and the last might rather be supposed to refer to the destruction of the first-born in Egypt, Exod. xii. 29. The pretended resemblance between the writing of Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 10—17. and the lamentation of Job, chap. vii. 1—8. is only a casual similarity in the complaints of misery. It must have been the true spirit of theory that could draw any argument from a comparison between the description of Job's friends, ch. xxx. 1—8. and the account of the Cutheans and Samaritans in Nehem. iv. 1—4. or that could fancy that the representation of Satan's appearance, Job i. 6, &c. was designed on the model of Zachariah's vision, Zech. iii. 1—5. See other resemblances as fanciful or accidental, in Warburton's and Garnett's allegories.

deed, to be no sufficient reason, notwithstanding every passage has been critically analysed for that purpose, to suppose that the book was not written or translated nearer the period of the history which it describes.

The opinion, indeed, most anciently and generally entertained was, that it was composed by Moses; who might have collected the information which it contained in the land of Midian⁸; and no objection to this opinion can be drawn from the place which is assigned to the book in the Bible, as no accurate attention appears to have been paid to chronology in this arrangement.

The book, however, whether written originally in the Arabic or in the Hebrew language; whether composed or translated by Moses, or any subsequent prophet, is unquestionably to be considered as an inspired production, since it was certainly in the Jewish canon. The work is not, indeed, particularly mentioned by Josephus: because the history which it contains was totally unconnected with the Hebrew affairs, as recorded in the Hebrew language, of which he professed exclusively to treat⁹. It must, however, be supposed to have been included in the catalogue of twenty-two

⁸ Origen cont. Cels. lib. vi. and in Job. Some have conceived that Moses produced it to console the Israelites under the hardships of their Egyptian bondage. Vid. Origen Com. Bava Bathra, cap. i. Julian Halicar. ap. Nicæt. The book contains some passages which resemble the hymn of Moses. Compare chap. xxix. 2—6. with Deut. xxxii. 7—14. Grey's Præf. ad Lib. Job, and Answer to Warburton. But if Moses was the author, he probably wrote it in the wilderness. No argument can be drawn from the supposed resemblance, or difference of style between the Book of Job, and the writings of Moses, as the subject affords such scope for fancy, and such opposite opinions have been entertained upon it.

⁹ Procem. Antiq. Jud. et Vit. Joseph.

books, which he assigned as the number contained in the sacred list¹. And it is cited as scriptural by the apostles²; and was universally received as canonical by all the fathers, councils, and Churches³.

Though the Book of Job is by no means to be considered as a drama written with fictitious contrivance; or as resembling in its construction any of those Grecian compositions which it preceded so long; it may still be represented as so far dramatic, as the parties are introduced speaking with great fidelity of character; and as it deviates from strict historical accuracy for the sake of effect. It is a complete, though peculiar work: regular in its subject and in the distribution of its parts⁴. Locke justly pronounces it to be a perfect poem: the first two chapters containing a prose argument, which he conceives (though without sufficient reason) to have been added by the compiler; as also the naming of the several speakers; the want of which leaves the Canticles in great obscurity. The interlutory parts of the book appear to be written in a loose kind of metre. Many of Job's discourses are strict and perfect elegies⁵. St. Jerom maintains that the book is composed from the third verse of the third chapter to the sixth verse of the forty-second chapter, in hexameter verses, with some occasional variations, according to the idiom of the language⁶.

¹ Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. § viii. p. 1333.

² 1 Cor. iii. 19. James v. 11. Compare ch. v. 13. also, ch. v. 17. with Hebrews xii. 5.

³ Gregor. Mag. Præf. in Job.

⁴ Lowth's Præl. Poet. xxxiii.

⁵ Chap. iii. vi. vii. x. xii. xvii. xix. xxix. xxx.

⁶ Lowth's Prælect. xiv. and Shuckford's Connect. vol. ii. chap. ix. Hieron. Præf. in Lib. Job.

Of this, however, there are no sufficient indications. The conclusion, which relates the final prosperity and death of Job, must have been added by the compiler.

The many excellent qualities of Job have deservedly rendered him, to all ages, an illustrious example of righteousness. Eusebius has justly remarked, that he was so distinguished for wisdom, as to have found out, by Divine grace, a conduct not unsuitable to the evangelical doctrine of our Saviour; and it appears from the passage, which in some copies of the Septuagint is annexed to this book ⁷, that the reverence which the Jews entertained for his character, had given rise to a tradition, by no means incredible, according to the opinion of Theophanes, that Job was one of those saints who rose out from their graves at the resurrection of Christ; a tradition which, if unsupported by any authority, may be still considered as bearing a merited testimony to his superior righteousness ⁸.

To form a perfect notion of the great excellence of Job's character, we must contemplate him in every vicissitude of his eventful life; and consider his conduct under every temptation of hazardous prosperity, or aggravating distress. We must judge of him, not from the unguarded expressions which his sufferings occa-

⁷ The addition in the Septuagint, and to Theodotion's version, runs thus :—Γέγραπται δὲ αὐτὸν πάλιν ἀναστήσεσθαι, μεθ' ὧν ὁ Κύριος ἀνίστησιν. Vid. Septuagint, Job, chap. xlii. 17. edit. 1831. The author of which must have believed that Job describes his assurance of a future resurrection in this book, as particularly in the contested passage; for where else in the Old Testament is it written that Job should rise again? Origen Epist. ad African. p. 15.

⁸ The Book of Job, it is said, was read in the ancient church on fast days, and at Easter: Job being considered as a figure of Christ. Vid. Origen in Job.

sionally provoked⁹, but from the deliberate strains of his piety, and his patient submission to the Divine will under every possible affliction but the pangs of guilt and the terrors of despair. If the mistaken severity of his friends sometimes provoked him in the fervour of controversy, to transgress the decency of an humble and modest doubt of his own innocence, yet reproof and recollection instantly called him to a confession of unworthiness, and to a becoming resignation to the Divine decrees¹. It was, indeed, in vindication of his own character that he displayed the fair description of his life: eminently distinguished as it was for integrity and benevolence; and it has been a want of sufficient attention to the scope of the dialogue, and to the firm principles to which Job, notwithstanding his occasional impatience, ultimately adheres, that has caused such strange misconceptions as have been entertained with respect to his character² and discourse.

To obviate, however, all erroneous objections to an example which the sacred writers have considered as excellent³; and to preclude false notions concerning sentiments represented as consistent with the Divine wisdom⁴, it is necessary to advert to the provocations which Job received, and to the complicated distress that disconcerted his mind, and irritated his passions. His friends, who appear to have visited him with charit-

⁹ Chap. vi. 26.

¹ Chap. viii. 20. xxxiv. 31, 32. xl. 4. 6. xlii. 3, 4.

² Garnett and Warburton.

³ Ezek. xiv. 14. James v. 11. Vid. also Tobit ii. 12. ver. 15. Vulgate.

⁴ Chrysost. Hom. v. ad Pop. Antioch. tom. ii. p. 51.

able intentions⁵, did in reality only aggravate his misfortunes; for having taken up a common, but mistaken notion, that prosperity and afflictions were dealt out in this life according to the deserts of men⁶, they accuse him of having merited his extraordinary misfortunes by some concealed guilt⁷; and are led on by the heat of contention “to vex his soul by their reproaches, and to break him in pieces with words.” Job, solicitous to refute the charge, and to vindicate the ways of Providence, affirms, on the contrary, that adversity is no proof of Divine wrath, but often designed as a trial⁸: that in this life the good and the bad indiscriminately flourish, and often perish in promiscuous destruction⁹; though intimations of displeasure are sometimes given by God, and warnings of wrath to them and their children; and that, consequently, there must be some period for judgment and equal retribution, for which the wicked are reserved¹. With respect to himself, though he admits the frailty and corruption of his nature, yet he disclaims all particular ground of fear from reflecting on his past conduct, appealing to the tribunal of Divine justice; and then describes with somewhat too much of pride and confidence, the ex-

⁵ Chap. ii. 11—13.

⁶ Chap. iv. 7, 8.

⁷ Chap. iv. 7—9. viii. 13. xviii. 21. xxii. 5.

⁸ Chap. ix. 22, 23. From this and other similar passages might perhaps be deduced an argument that Job was not acquainted with the temporal promises annexed to the Mosaic Law, however his reasoning, maturely considered, may be consistent with them; hence the propriety of strong intimations of a resurrection.

⁹ Chap. ix. 22—24. xii. 6. xxi. 7—15, 16. 21. 27.

¹ Chap. xxi. 30. xxvi. 6. xxvii. 8, 9. 19. xxxi. 3.

cellency of those virtues, with which he had “arrayed” his prosperity. With a degree of impatience likewise, that his sufferings, great as they were, could not justify, he indulges in frantic and extravagant language, desiring that the day might “perish wherein he was born, and the night and the day be cursed;” thus showing a thorough despondency and disregard with respect to the present life; earnestly wishes² for death; and appeals to the decisions of a future judgment for justification³. For this assumption, and for this impatience, he is justly censured by Elihu: his “wrath was kindled against Job, because he justified himself rather than God.” And he reprehends him with apparent severity for that vindication of himself which seemed to reflect on the justice of the Almighty⁴. Elihu rests the equity of the Divine dispensations on the acknowledged attributes of God; and it was probably under the influence of his admonition that Job⁵ was finally led to just convictions, so that God pronounces that “Job had spoken the thing that was right.” God even pursues the argument of Elihu, and in a style of

² Chap. vi. 8—11. vii. 7. ix. 21. x. 1. xvi. 22. xvii. 11—16. These passages fully prove, that Job did not look forward to any temporal restoration: of which he declares also the improbability, and laments only that he should not live to see his reputation vindicated. Vid. chap. xiv. 7—14. vii. 8—10. x. 21, 22. Peters’s Dissert. on Job, part ii. § 4. Scott’s version of Job, appendix ii.

³ Chap. xiii. 15—19. xiv. 12—15. xvi. 19. xvii. 15. xxiii. 3—10. xxvi. 6. xxx. 23, 24. xxxi. 14. all consistently with chap. xix. 25—29.

⁴ Chap. xxxiii. 8, 9. xxxiv. 5. 9. 35.

⁵ Some have conceived that the opening of God’s speech was addressed as a reproof to Elihu, though the substance of the answer was designed for Job.

inimitable majesty proclaims his own uncontrolled power, and unfathomable wisdom to the discountenancing of human knowledge. After the most awful and impressive representation of his own glorious works and attributes ⁶, and after some reprehension of Job, for his arrogant profession of innocence, the Almighty condemns the false reasoning of the three friends, and ratifies the conclusion which Job had made with respect to a future judgment ⁷. It is very remarkable in this discourse, broken and renewed at intervals, that Job seems (chap. ix. x.) to intimate that the Almighty, in his elevated exemption from infirmity, might be regarded as too high to judge of the temptations and conduct of men; observing, that there was no “daysman” (or mediator) between God and man, that might lay his hand upon them both ⁸; thus leading on the mind prophetically to a Redeemer: and he expressly addresses himself to God, calling, as it were, for one who might “in all things be tempted like as we ⁹.” He seems to feel that there was none to plead for him ¹.

Such is the scope of the discourse, which finely unfolds God’s designs in dealing out afflictions to mankind ²; which, when it first appeared, must have con-

⁶ Chap. xl. 8. 10.

⁷ Job had spoken right by having recourse to the arrangements of a future judgment. If the Divine justice did not rest on this foundation, it must have executed its decrees in the present life, as the friends of Job maintained. God does not condescend to explain the equity of his own counsels, any farther than by approving the convictions of Job; this was never questioned in the controversy, but defended on both sides, though on different principles.

⁸ Chap. ix. 33.

⁹ Chap. x. 4.

¹ Chap. x. 14.

² Job’s character was fully proved and perfected by this trial, and the pride and impatience of his temper corrected.

veyed truths that unassisted reason had not learnt; and have been well calculated to refute the absurd notions which then began to arise concerning the two independent principles of good and evil³. When the book was received into the Jewish canon, it must likewise have been well adapted to counteract any erroneous conception that might have been formed from a consideration of the temporal promises of the Law: which though they covenanted present reward to the Hebrew nation, considered as a community, by no means assured to individuals a full and exact remuneration in the present life⁴. The book also admirably serves to prove, that the power of temptation, allowed to evil spirits, is restricted, in merciful consideration of human weakness. It exhibits, in an interesting history, the vicissitudes of human affairs. It illustrates the danger of contention; the ingratitude and baseness of common friendship⁵; the vigilant care of Providence; and the necessity of resignation to the Divine will. Through the whole work we discover religious instruction shining forth amidst the venerable simplicity of ancient manners. It every where abounds with the noblest sentiments of piety, uttered in the spirit of inspired conviction. It is a work unrivalled for the magnificence of its language, and for the beautiful and sublime images which it presents⁶. In the wonderful speech of the Deity, every

³ Use and intent of Prophecy, p. 207.

⁴ This is evident from the relations of sacred history; from the complaints of the Psalmist; and from the sufferings and denunciations of the Prophets.

⁵ Job xlii. 11.

⁶ This book, in some of its beauties of imagery and description, has been compared with, and justly preferred to, the works of Homer.

line delineates his attributes, every sentence opens a picture of some grand object in creation⁷ characterized by its most striking features. Add to this, that the prophetic parts reflect much light on the economy of God's moral government; and every admirer of sacred antiquity, every enquirer after religious instruction, will seriously rejoice, that the enraptured sentence of Job⁸ is realized in a more effectual and unforeseen accomplishment: that while the memorable records of antiquity have mouldered from the "rock," the prophetic assurance and sentiments of Job are graven in Scriptures, which no time shall alter, no changes shall efface.

Vid. Wesley's Diss. VI. ex Gnom. Homer. Jacob du Port. Burke on the Sublime, p. 2. § 4, 5. p. 126. 130. ed. 1792.

⁷ Various have been the conjectures concerning the Behemoth, and the Leviathan, which are so forcibly described in this book. The former is by some supposed to have been the Elephant, by others, the Hippopotamus; it might have been the Mammoth; the latter is usually represented to have been the Crocodile. But as the descriptions exceed the character of all animals now known, they have been conceived to contain some mystery. It is one design of Scripture to convince mankind of ignorance; and difficulties, while they exercise sagacity, inculcate the useful lesson of humility. Vid. Bochart Hierozoicon. lib. v. c. xv. xviii. p. 754—791. Pars poster. Ed. Lond. 1663.

⁸ Chap. xix. 23.

OF THE
BOOK OF PSALMS.

THE Book of Psalms, which in the Hebrew is entitled ספר תהלים¹, that is, the Book of Hymns, or Praises, contains the productions of different writers². These productions are called, however, the Psalms of David, because a great part of them was composed by him, who for his peculiarly excellent spirit, was distinguished by the title of “the Psalmist³.” Some of them were perhaps penned before, and some after the time of David; but all of them, it may be presumed, by persons under the influence of the Holy Ghost, since all were judged worthy to be inserted into the canon of sacred writ, and are generally cited by evangelical

¹ In the New Testament it is called by Christ and his Apostles Βίβλος ψάλμων. Luke xx. 42. Acts i. 20. The word Psalter is derived from ψαλτήριον, psaltery, a musical instrument. styled Nabal in Hebrew. It was strung and made of wood in the style of a harp, and in the shape of a Greek delta, Δ. Vid. 1 Kings x. 12. Athenæus, lib. iv. cap. xxiii. et Casaubon Animadvers. in c. xxiii. p. 194. Edit. Casaub. 1597. and Calmet's Dissertation sur les instrumens de Musique, p. lii. tom. 4. edit. Paris, 1724.

² Hieron. ad Cyprian. p. 694. tom. 2. edit. Paris. 1699. Genebr. in Psal. i. R. David Kimchi.

³ 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. Joseph. Antiq. lib. vii. c. 12. p. 319.

writers as inspired. Hezekiel is said to have first made a compilation of them. Ezra probably collected them into one book, and placed them in the order which they now preserve, after they had been probably put together in part ⁴. It appears that the 150 Psalms therein contained were selected from a much greater number, which, it may be presumed, were not suggested by the Holy Spirit. The Levites were, no doubt, employed to keep in the temple ⁵, all such hymns as might be composed in honour of God; and of these, indeed, there must have been a large collection; but such only could be admitted into the canon as were evidently inspired compositions; and we may judge of the scrupulous severity with which they were examined, since the numerous hymns of Solomon were rejected; and even, as it is said, some of David's himself were thought unentitled to insertion ⁶. The authority of those, however, which we now possess, is established, not only by their rank among the sacred writings ⁷, and by the unvaried testimony of every age, but likewise by many intrinsic proofs of inspiration. Not only do they breathe through

⁴ 2 Chron. xxix. 25—30. They existed in a distinct collection or book, and were arranged probably in the same order, long before the time of Christ. Vid. Luke xx. 42. The second Psalm is cited by St. Paul in the order in which it now stands, Acts xiii. 33. Vid. Athan. in Synop. tom. ii p. 86 edit. 1627. Hilar. Prol. in lib. Psalm. p. 1. edit. Paris, 1693. Ezra iii. 10, 11. Euseb. ad Psal. lxxxvi.

⁵ 1 Chron. xvi. 2. xxv. 1—7. Joseph. Antiq. lib. iii. c. i. p. 98. See also lib. vii. c. xiv. p. 327.

⁶ The prophets were not always empowered to write by the suggestion of the Spirit; though St. Ambrose thought that David did always possess the gift of prophecy. Vid. Præf. in Psalm. p. 739. tom. i. edit. Paris, 1686. 1 Sam. xvi. 13.

⁷ They are cited as the Law. John x. 34. xii. 34.

every part a Divine spirit of eloquence, but they contain numberless illustrious prophecies that were remarkably accomplished, and frequently appealed to by the evangelical writers. The sacred character of the whole book is established by the testimony of our Saviour and his apostles; who in various parts of the New Testament appropriate the predictions of the Psalms as apposite to the circumstances of their lives, and intentionally preconcerted to describe them. Yet, as Dr. Allix justly remarks, though the sacred writers have fixed the sense of near fifty Psalms⁸, they have by no means cited all that they might have cited; but have only holden out a key to their hearers, making applications incidentally as circumstances occurred.

David has, by the later Jews, been reckoned among the Hagiographi⁹; not being considered by them as a prophet any more than Daniel, because he lived differently from the prophets, and amidst the magnificence of a court. He was supposed, however, by them, to have prophesied by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, not from any exterior impulse, but from some internal influence urging, and enabling him to speak and utter instructions on Divine, as well as human subjects, with more than his wonted powers, and in a style superior to that of the productions of human abilities. But the

⁸ New Testament, *passim*.

⁹ R. Albo. *Maam. III. c. x.* Kimchi *Madrash Sillim*, vol. ii. The Jewish gradations of prophecy are often very fancifully determined; but David must be pronounced a prophet by the Jewish rule, since he is a true prophet who is not deceived in foretelling future events. *Vid. Maimon. de Fundam. Legis, cap. x. § 2. Deut. xviii. 22. Jerem. xxviii. 9. Maimon. More Nevoch. par. ii. cap. xlv. xlv. p. 314. edit. Basil, 1629.*

prophetic character of David is established on much higher authority, as proclaimed by the sacred writers, and by his express declaration that the Spirit of God spake by him, and that his word was on his tongue¹; and the importance and clearness of his predictions demonstrate his title to the highest rank among the prophets. Many attempts have been made to ascertain precisely which Psalms were derived from David's pen, and likewise to discover the authors of the others. Some are said to have been composed by Moses; and some were written in, or after the captivity². It is necessary to refer to the commentators at large for various opinions upon this subject. Without dilating on the date and author of each individual Psalm, or the circumstances that occasioned its production, it may be briefly observed, that the Talmudists³ and Masoretic writers admit, as authors of the Psalms, Adam, Melchisedec, Abraham, Moses, the sons of Korah, David, Solomon, Asaph, Jeduthun, and Ethan; and that Calmet, after a judicious investigation, has adopted nearly the following arrangement, if we consider them, as distributed in the Hebrew and in our translation.

Under the first head are twelve Psalms, of which the chronology is uncertain; viz. i. iv. v. viii. xix. lxxxi. xc. xci. xcix. cx. cxxxix. cxlv. The first of these was pro-

¹ 2 Sam. xxi. 1. xxiii. 2. 2 Chron. xxix. 25. Nehem. xii. 24. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Matt. xiii. 35. xxii. 43. xxvii. 35. Mark xii. 36. Acts i. 16. ii. 30. iv. 25. Heb. iii. 7.

² Lightfoot Chron. of Old Test. Maius Œconomia Temporum, Vet. et Nov. Test. Hammond's, Patrick's, and Horne's Commentaries.

³ Bava Bathra, cap. i. Kimchi, &c.

bably composed by David or Ezra; the lxxxist.⁴ is attributed to Asaph; the xcth. to Moses; and the cxth. to David. The authors of the others are unknown, though some of them are inscribed to David.

Under the second head are included the Psalms which were composed by David during the persecution carried on against him by Saul, or other enemies; these are in number twenty; viz. vii. xi. xvi. xvii. xviii.⁵ xxii. xxxi. xxxiv. xxxv. lii. liv. lvi. lvii. lviii. lix. lxiv. cix. cxl. cxli. cxlii.

Under the third head are placed such as David composed on different occasions, after his accession to the throne; these, which amount to forty-four, are as follows: ii.⁶ vi. ix. xii. xx. xxi. xxiii. xxiv. xxviii. xxix. xxxii. xxxiii. xxxviii. xxxix. xl. xli. li. lx. lxi. lxii. lxiii. lxv. lxviii. lxix. lxx. lxxxvi. xcv. xevi. ci. ciii. civ. cv. cvi. cviii. cxviii. cxix. cxx. cxxi. cxxii. cxxiv. cxxxi. cxxxiii. cxliii. cxliv.

The fourth head contains those which were written by David during the rebellion of Absalom, amounting to six; which are the iiid. xlii. xliii. lv. lxxi. lxxxiv.

The fifth head includes those written from the death of Absalom to the captivity; these, which appear to be ten, are the xxxth. xlv. lxxii. lxxiv. lxxvi. lxxviii. lxxix. lxxxii. lxxxiii. cxxxii. Of these, probably, David composed the xxxth. the lxxiid. and possibly the lxxviiiith. The lxxvith. seems likely to have been produced after the miraculous deliverance from the Assyrian army, in the days of Hezekiah.

⁴ This was probably designed to be sung in the Temple upon the feast of Trumpets; as also at the feast of Tabernacles.

⁵ Compare with 2 Sam. xxii. and xxiii. 1.

⁶ See Acts iv. 25. and xiii. 33.

The sixth head comprehends the Psalms composed during the distresses and captivities of the church; these were written chiefly by Asaph and Korah, and their descendants. They may be reckoned thirty in number, and are the xth. xiii. xiv. xv. xxv. xxvi. xxvii. xxxvi. xxxvii. xlv. xlix. l. liii. ⁷ lxvii. lxxiii. lxxv. lxxvii. lxxx. lxxxviii. lxxxix. xcii. xciii. xciv. cii. cxv. cxxiii. cxxv. cxxix. cxxx. cxxxvii.

To the last head are assigned those hymns of joy and thanksgiving which were written as well after other deliverances as upon the release from the Babylonish captivity, and at the building and dedication of the temple. These, which are twenty-eight, are the xlvith. xlvii. xlviii. lxvi. lxxxv. lxxxvii. xcvi. xcvi. c. cvii. cxi. cxii. cxiii. cxiv. cxvi. cxvii. cxxvi. cxxvii. cxxviii. cxxxii. cxxxiv. cxxxv. cxxxvi. cxxxviii. cxlvi. cxlvii. cxlviii. cxlix. cl.

According to Calmet's account, from which this in some respect varies, only forty-five Psalms are positively assigned to David; though probably many more should be ascribed to him. It is, however, of less consequence to determine precisely by whom the Holy Spirit delivered these oracles, since we have indubitable evidence of the sacred character of the whole book; for it is collectively cited in Scripture⁸, and is prophetic in almost every part⁹: and several of those persons who are supposed to have contributed to the composition of

⁷ Bishop Horsley supposes the 14th and 53d to be different copies of the same Psalm.

⁸ The evangelical writers cite the Psalms in general under the name of David.

⁹ Gutheri Theolog. Proph. p. 98. Brentius ad 2 Jam. xxiii. 26.

the work, are expressly represented as prophets in Scripture¹.

The name of David is prefixed to about seventy-three; and many persons have collected from the last verse of the seventy-second Psalm, which reports, that "the prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended;" that David's hymns do there conclude. If, indeed, we consider that this Psalm was probably produced on the establishment of Solomon on the throne of his father, it is not unlikely that it contains the last effusions of David's prophetic spirit²; but as his compositions are not all placed together, many which follow in the order of the book may have been written by him: and we may suppose him to have been the author of at least all those which are not particularly assigned to others, or inconsistent with his time³. The Psalms are certainly not arranged with any regard to chronology⁴, and many

¹ Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun, supposed authors of some of the Psalms, are in Scripture called seers, and said to have prophesied. Vid. 2 Chron. xxix. 30. xxxv. 15. 1 Chron. xxv. 1—5. Vid. also, 1 Kings iv. 30, 31. where Ethan (whom some consider as the author of Psal. lxxxviii. and lxxxix.) is spoken of as eminent for wisdom.

² In the prospect of the prosperity of his son's government, David, on the strength of Divine promises, breaks out into an enraptured description of the duration, extent, and character of the kingdom of Christ. Vid. ver. 7. 11, 12. 17.

³ St. Peter cites the second Psalm as David's, though it is not inscribed to him; and others which have no title were undoubtedly written by David. Acts iv. 25. Compare Psal. cxv. 7, 8. with Heb. iv. 7. Ps. xcvi. with 1 Chron. xvi. 7, &c. Ps. cvi. with 1 Chron. xvi. 8. Ps. cvi. 47, 48. with 1 Chron. xvi. 35, 36. On the other hand, some which have no title, were not written by David, as cxxxvii. which was not composed till the Babylonish captivity.

⁴ Hieron. in Jerem. xxv. p. 645.

which follow the seventy-second in the order of the book, are inscribed with the name of David. It must be observed, however, that the titles prefixed to the Psalms, some of which are not in the Hebrew manuscripts, are often of very questionable authority; and sometimes undoubtedly not of equal antiquity with the text, being possibly affixed as conjectural. They were not always designed to point out the author, but often apply to the musicians⁵ appointed to set them to music. They, likewise, sometimes appear to be only terms of instruments⁶, or directions for the choice of tunes⁷. But it must be confessed, that upon this subject the opinions are so various and conjectural, that nothing satisfactory can be offered, any more than upon the word *Selah*⁸, which so often recurs.

Many fanciful divisions of this book have been made. The Jews, at some uncertain period, divided it into five sections, probably in imitation of the division of the Pentateuch⁹. The four first books of this division ter-

⁵ Some of the names prefixed to the Psalms are assigned to the musicians whom David appointed. Vid. 1 Chron. xv. 16—22. xvi. 7. The word *Lamnatzizeach* is supposed to mean “the chief Musician.” It is derived from *Mnatzeach*, which signifies Overseer.

⁶ As, perhaps, *Nehiloth*, *Sheminith*, *Gitith*, *Michtam*, *Aijelet* *Shehar*, &c. Vid. Geirus ad Ps. v. Michaelis, &c.

⁷ As *Neginoth*. Vid. Burney’s *Hist. Mus.* vol. i. p. 235. Harmer’s *Observations on Passages in Scripture*, vol. ii. chap. ii. Obs. serv. iii.

⁸ *Selah* is translated in the Septuagint *διάψαλμα*, a pause in singing, or a change in tune. Vid. Hieron. *Epist. ad Marcel.* and Calmet *Dissert. sur Selah*.

⁹ *Madrash Sillim*. fol. 2. vol. i. Hieron. *Præf. in Psalm.* juxt. Heb. Verit. Hilar. *Prol. in Psalm.* Huet. assigns this division to the time of the Maccabees. Vid. Prop. iv. in *Psalm.* Gregor. Nyss.

minate with the word Amen; the fifth with Hallelujah, which signifies, "Praise ye Jehovah." The present order of the Psalms is, perhaps, that in which they were sung in the temple¹, and the recitation there used may account for the occasional repetitions.

Moses may be considered among the earliest composers of sacred hymns²; all nations seem afterwards to have adopted this mode of expressing their religious sentiments, and to have employed hymns in celebrating the praises of their respective deities³, on a conviction derived, perhaps, from revealed truth, that they were acceptable to the Divine nature.

The composition of sacred hymns was carried to great excellence by succeeding prophets; but was improved to its highest perfection under David; who, if he did not first introduce, certainly established the custom of singing them in public service⁴, with alternate interchange of verse, as in our cathedral service⁵. David was, indeed, a great patron of sacred music⁶; he introduced many new instruments and improvements in this spiritual part of the Jewish worship, which was super-

in Psalm. Tractat. sec. c. v. p. 300. et c. xi. p. 324. tom. i. edit. Paris, 1638. 2 Macc. ii. 13, 14.

¹ Euthym. Prol. in Psalm. Comp. Psalms xiv. and liii.

² Exod. xv. Deut. xxxii.

³ Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. ii. c. xvii. Pharmat. de Nat. Deor. Targ. in cent. i. 1. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. vi. p. 784. edit. Potter. Porphyry de Abstin. lib. iv. § 8. p. 153. edit. Cantab. 1655. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. lib. iv. c. xvii.

⁴ 1 Chron. vi. 31. xvi. 6, 7. Ecclus. xlvii. 9.

⁵ Ezra iii. 11.

⁶ 1 Chron. xvi. 42. xxiii. 5. xxv. 1. 2 Chron. vii. 6. xxix. 26. and Joseph. Antiq. lib. vii. c. xii.

induced over that of sacrifice⁷. Josephus represents him, when in the enjoyment of peace, to have composed many hymns in different measures, and to have instructed the Levites to sing praises to God, not only on the Sabbath, but on other solemn festivals⁸. The practice of Psalmody must have received some interruption from the suspension of the temple service, during the captivity⁹. It was, however, restored, though with less splendour, by Ezra¹; and continued till it received the sanction of Christ and his apostles, who themselves recommended the custom by their precept and example².

The hymn which our Saviour sung with his disciples at the conclusion of the last supper, is generally supposed to have consisted of the Psalms that are contained between the one hundred and thirteenth and the one hundred and eighteenth inclusive³. This was called by the Jews the great Hallel, or hymn, and was usually

⁷ August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xvii. c. xiv. p. 486-7. edit. Paris, 1685. Codure, Caten. in Psalm. Præp. p. 10.

⁸ Antiq. lib. vii. c. xii. p. 319. edit. Huds.

⁹ Psalm cxxxvii.

¹ Ezra iii. 11. Nehem. xii. 24. 31. 38. 40.

² Matt. xxvi. 30. 1 Cor. xiv. 15. Ephes. v. 19. Col. iii. 16. Rev. xiv. 2, 3. Vid. Calmet's Preface, Bossuet, Hammond, Allix, &c. All vocal and instrumental performers were excluded from the Jewish synagogues after the destruction of Jerusalem. The little singing now used is of modern introduction. The Jews, indeed, consider it as improper to indulge in such expression of joy before the advent of their still expected Messiah. The German Jews, however, entertain different notions, and have a musical establishment. They have, likewise, some melodies supposed to be very ancient; but it is thought that the ancient diatonic notes are preserved more in the Psalmody of our church, than in the Jewish synagogues.

³ Buxtorf, Lex. Talmud. הלל. Col. vi. 13. Lightfoot, vol. ii. 354. 444.

sung by them at the celebration of the Passover. Christ also exclaimed, in his solemn invocation on God from the cross, in the complaints of the twenty-second Psalm⁴, and breathed out his last sentiments of expiring piety in the words of David⁵. “No tongue of man or angel,” says Dr. Hammond, “can convey a higher idea of any book, and of their felicity who use it aright.” The Christian church has, therefore, by Divine appointment, adopted the Psalms as a part of its service, and chosen from its first institution, to celebrate the praises of God in the language of Scripture⁶;

⁴ Comp. Matt. xxvii. 46. with Ps. xxii. 1.

⁵ Comp. Luke xxiii. 46. with Ps. xxxi. 5.

⁶ 1 Cor. xiv. 15. Ephes. v. 19. Coloss. iii. 16. James v. 13. Constit. Apost. lib. ii. c. lvii. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. xxxiii. Theod. Hist. Eccles. lib. ii. c. xxiv. August. Conf. lib. ix. c. vi. § 2. lib. x. c. xxxiii. § 2. Plin. Epist. lib. x. Epist. xcvi. Tertul. Apol. c. ii. p. 3. c. xxxix. p. 36. Fabric. Bib. Græc. vol. v. c. 1. The practice of psalm-singing, as used in our choir, is derived, probably, from the ancient alternate chanting of the Jews (Ezra iii. 11. Nehem. xii. 24.) authorised by the apostles, and adopted into the earliest Christian churches. It was certainly instituted at Antioch, between A.D. 347 and 356, by Flavianus and Diodorus: who divided the choir into two parts, which sang alternately. Singing was soon afterwards introduced into the Western church by St. Ambrose; and adopted with improvements by Gregory the Great, who established the grave Gregorian chant which now prevails in the Romish church. Choral music was brought into England by the companions of Austin the monk, A.D. 596, and first established at Canterbury. Objections were often made in this country to church music, but it was approved by the compilers of king Edward's Liturgy: and soon after was composed the formula that now regulates (with little variation) the choral service, which, though occasionally suspended till the restoration of Charles the Second, has since been uniformly continued. Vid. Mart. Gerbert. Music. Sac. Bedford's Temple Music. Hawkins's History of Music, vol. i. and ii. Burney's History of Music, vol. i. p. 154, &c.

and these sacred hymns are, indeed, admirably calculated for every purpose of devotion.

The expressions and descriptions of the Psalms may seem to some persons to have been appropriate and peculiar to the Jewish circumstances; and David, indeed, employs figures and allusions applicable to the old dispensation. But as in recording temporary deliverances and blessings vouchsafed to the Jews, we commemorate spiritual advantages thereby signified, we use the Psalms with the greatest propriety in our church. "We need," as an elegant commentator has observed, "but substitute the Messiah for David, the Gospel for the Law, and the church of Christ for that of Israel⁷;" we need but consider the ceremonies and sacrifices of the law as the emblems of spiritual service, of which every part hath its correspondent figure; and we appropriate the Psalms to our own use, as among the noblest treasures of inspired wisdom. They finely illustrate the connexion which subsisted between the two covenants, and shed an evangelical light on the Mosaic dispensation by unveiling its inward radiance. The veneration for them has, in all ages of the church, been considerable. The fathers assure us that, in the earlier times, the whole Book of Psalms was generally learned by heart⁸, and that the ministers of every gradation were expected to be able to repeat them from memory; that Psalmody was everywhere a constant attendant at meals and in business; that it enlivened the social hours, and softened the fatigues of life. The Psalms were much in use at the Reformation, and they have, indeed, as Lord Clarendon observes, been ever thought

⁷ Bishop Horne's Pref. to Com. on the Psalms.

⁸ "Pueri modulantur domi, viri foro circumferunt," says an ancient writer. Vid. Basil, and Ambrose Præf. in Psalm.

to contain something extraordinary for the instruction and reformation of mankind ⁹.

Numberless are the testimonies which might be produced in praise of these admirable compositions, which contain, indeed, a complete epitome of the history, doctrines, and instructions of the Old Testament ¹; delivered with every variety of style that may encourage attention, and framed with an elegance of construction superior far to that of the finest models in which Pagan antiquity hath enclosed its mythology. These invaluable Scriptures are daily repeated without weariness, though their beauties are often overlooked in familiar and habitual perusal. As hymns immediately addressed to the Deity, they reduce righteousness to practice, and while we acquire the principles, we perform the offices of piety; as while we supplicate for blessings, we celebrate the memorial of former mercies. The general sentiments which are uttered, appear often applicable to individuals, and as we read, we appropriate the reflections, and seem to express our own feelings in inspired language.

Here, likewise, while in the exercise of devotion, faith is enlivened by the display of prophecy. David, in the spirit of inspiration, uttered his oracles with the most lively and exact description. He expressed the

⁹ Horne's Preface. It is remarkable, that this Book of Psalms is exactly the kind of work which Plato wished to see for the instruction of youth, but conceived it impossible to execute, as above the power of human abilities : *τοῦτο δὲ Θεοῦ ἢ θείου τίνος ἂν εἴη* but this must be the work of a God, or of some divine person. De Legibus, lib. ii. tom. ii. p. 657. edit. Serrani, 1578.

¹ Luther called the Psalms a small Bible. The Psalter was one of the first books printed after the discovery of the art.

whole scheme of man's redemption: the incarnation²; the passion; the resurrection³; and ascension of the Son of God, as likewise the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which our Lord obtained⁴, and the increase of his dominion, rather as a witness, than as a prophet. As an eminent type of his descendant, he is often led in the retrospect of the circumstances of his own life, to speak of those of Christ. While he is describing his own enemies and sufferings, the Spirit enlargeth his sentiments, swelleth out his expressions to a proportion adapted to the character of the Messiah designated by Divine appointment as a priest for ever, and a judge of the heathen⁵. Hence even the personal sufferings of Christ are described with minute and accurate fidelity; and in the anticipated scene of prophecy we behold him pourtrayed on the cross, and surrounded by those who "stand looking and staring" upon him, under every attendant circumstance of anguish, mockery, and horror, even to the "parting of his garments," and to the "casting lots for his vesture⁶."

David, apprised that the Messiah should spring from his own immediate family⁷, looked forward with peculiar interest to his character and afflictions. In the foreknowledge of those sufferings which Christ should experience from his "familiar friends," and from the numerous adversaries of his church, the Psalmist speaks

² Psalm ii. 7. Acts xiii. 33. Talmud Sucah. cap. v. Aben Ezra. R. Kimchi.

³ Psalm xvi. 9—11. compare with Acts ii. 29—36.

⁴ Psalm lxviii. 18. Eph. iv. 6—13. ⁵ Psalm cx. 4—6.

⁶ Psalm xxii. 16. 18. compared with Matthew xxvii. 35. Burnet's 10th and 11th sermons in Boyle's Lectures.

⁷ 2 Sam. vii. 12. Psalm cxxxii. 11. 18.

with the highest indignation against those enemies who prefigured the foes of Christ; and imprecates, or predicts, the severest vengeance against them⁸. So signal a representative of Christ, indeed, was David considered by the sacred writers, that our Saviour is often expressly distinguished in Scripture by his name⁹; and the Jews themselves perceived that the Messiah and his kingdom were shadowed out as capital objects in the descriptions of the Psalmist. Sensible that what David uttered, as often not applicable to his own person and history¹, must have had reference to some future character, they transcribed whole passages from them into their prayers for the speedy coming of the great object of their hopes; though, in that infatuated blindness which characterizes their conduct with the marks of glaring inconsistency, they deny that these spiritual allusions are applicable to the person of our Saviour; and there-

⁸ The severity with which David inveighs against the wicked, has been erroneously considered as inconsistent with the spirit of true religion. The passages, however, which are objected to on this score, are either prophetic threats, or general denunciations of God's wrath against sin, as it were, personified. It is the Spirit, rather than David, which utters its imprecations against the unrighteous enemies of the church. Forgiveness and mercy towards the persons of his own enemies, were distinguished parts of David's character, of which we see very beautiful proofs in 1 Sam. xxiv. 4. 10. xxvi. 7—13. 2 Sam. i. 17—27. xix. 16—23. He cursed only those whom God instructed him to curse; and the church, in its public service, joins in these general curses, as a religious society, without violating the spirit of charity. See 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Gal. i. 8, 9.

⁹ Isa. lv. 3. Jerem. xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 24. Hos. iii. 5.

¹ Psal. xvi. 10. xx. 4. 6. xxii. 16—18. lxxii. and Justin Martyr, Dial. 1st.

fore still pray, in the words of the Psalmist, for the arrival of the Messiah ².

Josephus asserts ³, and most of the ancient writers maintain, that the Psalms were composed in various metres. They have undoubtedly a peculiar conformation of sentences, and a measured distribution of parts. Many of them are elegiac, and most of David's are of the lyric kind. There is no sufficient reason, however, to believe, as some writers have imagined, that they were written in rhyme, or exactly in any known measures. Some of them are acrostic; and though the regulations of the Hebrew Prosody are now lost, there can be no doubt, from the harmonious modulation of the Psalms, that they were written with some kind of metrical order, and they must have been composed in accommodation to the measure to which they were set ⁴. The Masoretic writers have marked them in a manner different from the other sacred writings ⁵.

The Hebrew copies and the Septuagint version of this book contain the same number of Psalms; only the Septuagint translators have, for some reason, which

² Chandler's Defence of Christianity, ch. iii. sect. 2. Comp. Ps. xxxii. with 13th, 16th, 18th, and other prayers. Hosan Rabba.

³ Lib. vii. Antiq. c. xii. p. 319, &c. Hieron. Epist. 2d. ad Paulin. tom. iv. p. 573.

⁴ It is probable that the Psalms were originally divided into verses terminating with the conclusion of the sense, though many of the Jews maintain, that the Masorites introduced the distinction. Vid. Buxtorf. Com. Masoret. p. 38.

⁵ Some persons suppose that the points were at first musical characters, and it is said that they still serve, not only to mark the accentuation in reading, but also to regulate the melody in singing the prophecies; and that as to high and low, as well as to long and short notes. Vid. Burney's Hist. of Music, vol. i. p. 251.

does not appear, thrown the ninth and tenth into one⁶: as also the one hundred and fourteenth, and the one hundred and fifteenth; and have divided the one hundred and sixteenth; and the one hundred and forty-seventh, each into two. In the Syriac⁷ and Arabic versions, indeed, and also in most copies of the Septuagint, as well as in an Anglo-Saxon version, there is annexed to the hundred and fifty canonical Psalms, an additional hymn, which is entitled, “a Psalm of thanksgiving of David, when he had vanquished Goliath.” This, though admitted by some⁸ as authentic, was probably (as it is not in the Hebrew) a spurious work of some Hellenistical Jew; who might have compiled it out of the writings of David, Isaiah, and Ezekiel. The version of the Psalms in our Bible, which was made by the translators employed under James the First, is posterior to that printed in our prayer-books, which was executed in 1539⁹. This last, as very excellent, and

⁶ So that the Romanists, who use St. Jerom’s translation, reckon one behind us from the xth to the cxivth, and two from thence to the cxvith, and again one from thence to the cxlvith, from whence they continue to agree with us.

⁷ It is said in the Syriac, that some add twelve Psalms, which, however, are there rejected as without authority.

⁸ Athanasius in Synop. lib. xiii. p. 90. edit. Paris, 1627.

⁹ Introduction, p. 34. This was Tyndale’s and Coverdale’s translation, corrected by Toustal and Heath. In this the fourteenth Psalm contains eleven verses; whereas in the Hebrew, and in our Bible, it contains but seven (or rather eight.) The three verses have been continued as genuine, as they are in some copies of the Septuagint, and appear to be cited by St. Paul, Rom. iii. 13—18. They might have been framed from detached passages, and other parts of Scripture. See particularly Psalm v. 9. cxl. 3. x. 7. Isaiah lix. 7, 8. Psalm xxxvi. 1. The denunciations in the cxxxvith Psalm, which are similar to those of Isaiah, Jeremiah,

familiarized by custom, was retained in the Liturgy, though as translated chiefly from the Septuagint, with some variation in conformity to the Hebrew, corrupted by the Masoretic points, it does not so exactly correspond with the original as that in our Bibles ¹.

David was the son of Jesse, of the tribe of Judah, a descendant of that family, to which God's covenant was made. He was born about A.M. 2920, and lived seventy years, during forty of which he was in possession of the throne of Israel,² being raised by God from a humble to a conspicuous station, in order possibly that the genealogy of the Messiah might be ascertained with more clearness and distinction. He declared with "his last words," that "the spirit of the Lord spake by him," "that his word was in his tongue, and that God had made with him an everlasting covenant, which was his salvation and his desire³." He was eminently distinguished by great and amiable qualities. The particulars

and Obadiah, were fulfilled in the destruction of Edom and Babylon.

¹ Where the translators of the version published in our prayer-books have varied from the Septuagint, and followed the Hebrew Masoretic copies, the Hebrew text, if read without the points, would be as consistent with the Septuagint, and other ancient versions, as it is with the translation of our Bible. In the instances, then, where the authors of the version in the Liturgy have varied, in compliance with the Masoretic authority, they have generally erred. Vid. Dr. Brett and Johnson, at the end of Holy David.

² He reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years, being anointed long before he came into possession of the throne. Vid. 2 Sam. v. 4, 5. 1 Kings ii. 11. 1 Chron. xxix. 27. and Chandler.

³ 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—5. The word David implies "beloved." Vid. 1 Sam. xiii. 14. and xxvi. 18. Bp. Porteus's sermon on David's character.

of his interesting life are displayed with peculiar minuteness in sacred history ; and many of his Psalms are so characteristic of the circumstances under which they were composed, that there cannot be a more engaging task, than that of tracing their connection with the events of his history ⁴ ; and of discovering the occasions on which they were severally produced, in the feeling and descriptive sentiments which they contain. If in the successive scenes of his life, we behold him active in the exercise of those virtues which his piety produced, we here contemplate him in a no less attractive point of view. In this book we find him a sincere servant of God, divested of all the pride of royalty ; pouring out the emotions of his soul in privacy, and in the congregation of his people, and unfolding his pious sentiments in every vicissitude of condition. At one time we have the prayers of distress ; at another, the praises and exultation of triumph. Hence are the Psalms admirably adapted to all circumstances of life, and serve alike for the indulgence of joy, or the soothing of sorrow ; they still chase away sullen despondence and affliction, and furnish gladness by strains of holy and religious rapture ⁵.

⁴ Delaney's Life of David.

⁵ Ephes. v. 19. Col. iii, 16.

OF THE
BOOK OF PROVERBS.

THE Proverbs, as we are informed at the beginning, and in other parts of the book¹, were written by Solomon, the son of David; a man, as the sacred writings assure us, peculiarly endued with Divine wisdom². Whatever conceptions of his superior understanding we may be led to form by the particulars recorded of his judgment and attainments, we shall find them amply justified, on perusing the works which remain in testimony of his abilities. This enlightened monarch, being desirous of employing the wisdom which he had received to the advantage of mankind, produced several works for their instruction. Of these, however, three only were admitted into the canon of the sacred writ by Ezra; the others, being either not designed for religious instruction, or so mutilated by time and accident, as to have been judged imperfect. The book of Proverbs, that of Ecclesiastes, and that of the Song of Solomon, are all that remain of him, who is related to have spoken “three thousand proverbs³,” whose “songs

¹ Vid. chap. i. 1. xxv. 1.

² Vid. 1 Kings iii. 12. iv. 29—31. xi. 9. 2 Chron. i. 12.

³ Vid. 1 Kings iv. 32. Josephus magnifies the account of Scripture to 3000 books of Proverbs; and St. Jerom, as erroneously

were a thousand and five;" and who "spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall;" who "spake also of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes." If, however, many valuable writings of Solomon have perished, we have reason to be grateful for what still remains. Of his proverbs and songs the most excellent have been providentially preserved; and as we possess his doctrinal and moral works, we have no right to murmur at the loss of his physical and philosophical productions.

This Book of Proverbs contains the maxims of long experience, framed by one who was well qualified, by his rare talents and endowments, to draw just lessons from a comprehensive survey of human life. Solomon judiciously sums up his precepts in brief energetic sentences, which are well contrived for popular instruction⁴. The wisdom, indeed, of all ages, from the highest

conceives, that these 3000 Proverbs are contained in the present book; but we must admit that many of this number have perished. Some have supposed, that the physical books of Solomon were extant in the days of Alexander, and were translated by means of an interpreter into the works of Aristotle and Theophrastus, whose collections have perished. Vid. Antiq. lib. viii. c. ii. p. 339. edit. Hud. Juchasin. Eusebius (as cited by Anastasius) says, that King Hezekiah suppressed them, because abused by the people.

⁴ The Proverbs of Solomon are called in the Hebrew Meshalim, from מַשַּׁל, Meshel, to have dominion. The word may be translated *ῥηρίαι δόξαι*, sententiæ maxime ratæ, authoritative maxims, elevated precepts. Vid. Job xxvii. 1. Cicer. de Fin. l. ii. c. 7. p. 108. edit. Paris, 1740. Maius Œconomia temporum. Vet. et Novi Test. p. 838. Bacon de Augmentis Scientiarum. They are to be considered as general maxims, and not as universally and invariably applicable, or as always true in a strict sense without any exceptions.

antiquity, hath chosen to compress its lessons into compendious sentences, which were peculiarly adapted to the simplicity of earlier times; which are readily conceived, and easily retained; and which circulate in society as useful principles, to be unfolded and applied as occasion may require. The inspired son of David had the power of giving peculiar poignancy and weight to this style of writing, and his works have been as it were the storehouse from which posterity hath drawn its best maxims⁵. His Proverbs are so justly founded on principles of human nature, and so adapted to the permanent interests of man, that they agree with the manners of every age; and may be assumed as rules for the direction of our conduct in every condition and rank of life, however varied in its complexion, or diversified by circumstances; they embrace not only the concerns of private morality, but the great objects of political importance⁶. Subsequent moralists have, in their discourses on œcumenical prudence, done little more than dilate on the precepts, and comment on the wisdom of Solomon. Grotius, extensive as were his own powers, was unable to conceive that the Book of Proverbs could be the work of one man, and supposes it to have been a collection of the finest proverbs of the age, (made in the same manner as those published

⁵ Many of the sacred writers who followed Solomon borrowed his thoughts and expressions; and many heathen writers are indebted to him for their brightest sentiments. Vid. Huet. prop. 4. p. 171. edit. Paris, 1679, where imitations are produced from Theognis, Sophocles, Euripides, Anaxilaus, Plato, Horace, and Menander.

⁶ St. Basil says of this book, that it is *ὅλως διδασκαλία βιοῦ*, an universal instruction for the government of life. Homil. 12, in Princip. Proverb. p. 454. tom. i. edit. 1618.

by some of the emperors at Constantinople in subsequent times,) and perfected from various collections under Hezekiah⁷. But this opinion, founded in part on some rabbinical accounts, cannot be allowed to invalidate the exclusive claim of Solomon, to what is usually ascribed to him. The work might, perhaps, compose part of the three thousand proverbs which Solomon is described to have uttered, being probably digested as far as the twenty-fifth chapter by that monarch himself, and afterwards received into the canon with some additions.

The book may be considered under five divisions. The first part, which is a kind of preface, extends to the tenth chapter. This contains general cautions and exhortations from a teacher to his pupil, delivered in varied and elegant language: duly connected in its parts; illustrated with beautiful descriptions; decorated with all the ornaments of poetical composition, and well contrived as an engaging introduction to awaken and interest the attention.

The second part extends from the beginning of the tenth chapter to the seventeenth verse of the twenty-second, and contains what may strictly and properly be called Proverbs, given in unconnected general sentences⁸ with much neatness and simplicity⁹; adapted

⁷ Grotius Præf. in Prov.

⁸ The general scope of the discourse, however, must be remembered, even in the explication of detached sentiments.

⁹ The proverbs generally consist of two sentences, joined in a kind of antithesis; the second being sometimes a reduplication, sometimes an explanation, and sometimes an opposition in the sense to the first. This style of composition produces great beauties in many other parts of Scripture, where it is employed for poetical arrangement. Vid. Lowth's Prælect. xix.

to the instruction of youth, and probably more immediately designed by Solomon for the improvement of his son¹. These are truly, to use his own comparison, “apples of gold in pictures of silver.”

In the third part, which contains what is included between the sixteenth verse of the twenty-second chapter and the twenty-fifth chapter, the instructor is supposed, for a more lively effect, to address his pupil as present; he drops the sententious style of proverbs, and communicates exhortations in a more continued and connected strain.

The proverbs which are included between the twenty-fifth and thirtieth chapters, and which constitute the fourth part, are supposed to have been selected from a much greater number by the men of Hezekiah; that is, by the prophets whom he employed to restore the service and the writings of the church, as Eliakim, and Joah, and Shebnah; and probably Hosea, Micah, and even Isaiah², who all flourished in the reign of that monarch, and doubtless co-operated with his endeavours to re-establish true religion among the Jews. These proverbs, indeed, appear to have been selected by some collectors after the time of Solomon, as they repeat some which he had previously introduced in the former part of the Book³.

The fifth part contains the prudent admonitions which Agur, the son of Jakeh, delivered to his pupils,

¹ Rehoboam; though the phrase “my son” is only a term of general application. Vid. Hebrews, chap. xii. 5. Michael. Præf. in lib.

² Vid. R. Moses Kimchi.

³ Compare chap. xxv. 24. with xxi. 9; xxvi. 13. with xxii. 13; xxvi. 15. with xix. 24; xxvi. 22. with xviii. 8, &c.

Ithiel and Ucal; these are included in the thirtieth chapter. It contains also the precepts which the mother of Lemuel delivered to her son, as described in the thirty-first chapter.

Concerning these persons whose works are annexed to those of Solomon, commentators have entertained various opinions. The original words which describe Agur as the author of the thirtieth chapter, might be differently translated ⁴; but admitting the present construction as most natural and just, we may observe, that the generality of the fathers, and ancient commentators, have supposed that under the name of Agur, Solomon describes himself, though no satisfactory reason can be assigned for his assuming this name ⁵. Others conjecture that Agur and Lemuel were interlocutors with Solomon, but upon very insufficient grounds, since the book has no appearance of dialogue, for there is not any interchange of person. It is more probable, that though it was designed principally to contain the sayings of Solomon, others might have been added by the men of Hezekiah: and Agur might have been an inspired writer ⁶, whose moral and proverbial sentences

⁴ They might be translated, the words of the Collector. In the Septuagint, where this chapter is placed immediately after the xxivth, we read instead of the first verse, τὰ δὲ λέγει ὁ ἀνὴρ τοῖς πιστεύουσι Θεῷ, καὶ παύομαι, Thus speaketh the man to those who believe in God, and I cease.

⁵ Vid. Lowth's xviiiith Prælect. and Calmet.

⁶ The second, and third verses, though they tend as well as the eighth to prove that the chapter was not written by Solomon, yet by no means invalidate the author's claim to inspiration, who here describes himself as devoid of understanding before he received the influx of Divine wisdom. In the Septuagint the third verse expresses a sense directly contrary, Θεὸς δεδίδαχέ με σοφίαν καὶ γνῶσιν

(for such is the import of the word *Massa*, rendered prophecy⁷;) were joined with those of the wise man, because of the conformity of their matter. So likewise the dignity of the book is not affected, if we suppose the last chapter to have been written by a different hand; and admit the mother of Lemuel to have been a Jewish woman, married to some neighbouring prince; or Abiah, the daughter of the high-priest Zechariah, and mother of king Hezekiah; in any case, it must be considered as the production of an inspired writer, or it would not have been received into the canon of Scripture. But it was perhaps meant that by Lemuel we should understand Solomon⁸; for the word which signifies one belonging to God, might have been given unto him as descriptive of his character, since to Solomon, God had expressly declared that he would be unto him a father⁹.

Dr. Delaney, who was a strenuous advocate for this opinion, declares that he took great pains to examine the objections that have been alleged against it, and he assures us that they are such as readers of the best understanding would be little obliged to him for retailing, or refuting. One of the chief objections, indeed, rather confirms what it was intended to destroy. The mother of Lemuel thrice calls her son, *Bar*, a word used in the second Psalm, and in the Song of Solomon¹;

ἀγίων ἔγνωνκα, God hath taught me wisdom, and I have learnt the knowledge of holy things.

⁷ מִשָּׁא, the burden of the word of the Lord. Zech. ix. 1. Job xxvii. 1. Prov. xxx. 1. xxxi. 1.

⁸ Vid. R. Nathan. Prov. iv. 3, 4.

⁹ 2 Sam. vii. 14.

¹ בָּר. Ps. ii. 12. and Cant. vi. 9. *Bar* in the Chaldee signifies son. David might have used it in that sense as well as Bath-

which may lead us to think that Lemuel may have been designed to denote Solomon, since the expression is employed by his father and by himself². He then, conceives that the mother of Lemuel was Bathsheba³, and that the commendation annexed was designed for her, and he vindicates her character as deserving the eulogium. Should some circumstances in the description, however, be judged inapplicable to her, there is no reason why we should not conceive a general character to have been intended. It appears then upon a collective consideration, that the greatest part of the book was digested, and perhaps composed by Solomon himself; that some additions were made, principally from the works of Solomon, by the men of Hezekiah; and that the whole was arranged into its present form, and admitted into the canon by Ezra. It is often cited by the evangelical writers⁴, and the work, as it now stands, contains an invaluable compendium of instruction. It is supposed to have been the production of Solomon when arrived at maturity of life: when his mind had multiplied its stores, and become enlarged by long observation and experience. It was probably written before the book of Ecclesiastes, for it seems to be therein mentioned⁵.

sheba in this book; for we know not how early foreign expressions (if it be one) might have been adopted into the Hebrew language.

² Vid. Delaney's *Life of David*, book iv. chap. xxi. and Calmet.

³ Vid. also Bedford, p. 607, Calmet and Locke, who are of the same opinion. Prov. iv. 3. Bathsheba is by some supposed to have been endued with the spirit of prophecy. Vide chap. xxxi. 1.

⁴ Vid. Matt. xv. 4. Luke xiv. 10. Rom. xii. 16, 17. 20. 1 Thess. v. 15. 1 Pet. iv. 8. v. 5. James iv. 6, &c. passim. See ch. iii. 11, 12. xxvi. 11. compare with Heb. xii. 5, 6. 2 Pet. ii. 22.

⁵ Eccles. xii. 9.

Solomon was born about A.M. 2971. He succeeded David about eighteen years after, and enjoyed a prosperous reign of near forty years⁶. Under his government the kingdom was remarkable for its well regulated œconomy, and its extensive commerce. It was so enlarged by his conquests and politic management, that “he reigned over,” or made tributary, “all the kings from the river (Euphrates) even to the land of the Philistines and the borders of Egypt⁷.” Illustrious men were attracted from all parts by his fame for wisdom and magnificence⁸. The son of Sirach said of him, that he was “a flood filled with understanding; that his soul covered the whole earth; and that he filled it with dark parables⁹.” His character, like that of every human being, was occasionally marked with the stains of sin, particularly towards the close of life, when his enfeebled mind was seduced to corrupt affections and idolatry. It seems to have been intended by God, to expose the insufficiency of the highest endowments without a strict reverence to the precepts prescribed by him. The impotency even of preternatural strength had been shown in Samson; and the failure, even of piety, when it yielded to the temptation of human passions, had been sadly illustrated in the transgression of David. Solomon exemplified the vanity of wisdom, the highest gift of Divine favour, when he de-

⁶ The name of Solomon is analogous to Pacific, and is happily descriptive of the peaceful prosperity which he enjoyed. The Rab- bins consider it as appellative.

⁷ 2 Chron. ix. 26.

⁸ 1 Kings x. 20.

⁹ Eccclus. xlvii. 14, 15. The ancients prided themselves much on the knowledge of parables and proverbs. Vid. Prov. i. 6. Wisd. viii. 8. Eccclus. i. 25. vi. 35. xxxix. 1—3.

parted from the commandments of God. He disregarded all the spirit of those instructions which had been appointed by the Almighty, for the government of his country. He was misled by the love of splendour, and by the admiration of those who resorted to his court, to seek riches and luxuries by foreign trade. In neglect of the Divine word, he multiplied to himself horses and chariots, and by increasing to a licentious excess, the number of his wives, he was enticed, at length, by their seductions, to idolatry¹, and added another striking instance of the truth of the inspired declaration, with respect to the sons of men, that there is none righteous, no, not one.

The high reputation which Solomon enjoyed, occasioned many spurious writings to pass under the sanction of his name, as the Psalter, as it is called, of Solomon, which consists of eighteen Greek Psalms, and which was probably the work of some Hellenistical Jew², who might have compiled it from the writings of David, Isaiah, and Ezekiel³. Another book, likewise, entitled *The Cure of Diseases*, mentioned by Kimchi⁴; *The Contradictions of Solomon*, condemned

¹ Deut. xvii. 16, 17. Compare with 1 Kings iv. 26—28. x. 14—23. 26—29. xi. 1—9.

² The Hellenistical Jews were Jews dispersed in foreign countries, who spoke the Greek language.

³ This Psalter, which, like most of the Hellenistical works, is full of Hebraisms, was copied from an ancient Greek manuscript in the Augsburg library by Andrea Scotto, and published with a Latin version by John Lewis de la Cerda. Vid. Calmet, *Pref. Gen. sur les Pseaumes*. These Psalms appear, from the index at the end of the New Testament, to have been formerly in the Alexandrian Manuscript, though they have been lost or torn from thence.

⁴ Suidas states that Solomon wrote a *Treatise on Remedies of*

by pope Gelasius; and his Testament, cited by M. Gaumin; with five other books, mentioned by Alfred the Great, in his *Mirror of Astrology*; and four named by Trithemenus, which savour of magical invention, are probably all spurious; as well as the letters which he is said to have written to Hiram, and Hiram's answers, though Josephus considers these last as authentic⁵. The magical writings which were attributed to Solomon, were so assigned in consequence of a notion which prevailed in the East, that Solomon was conversant with magic; a notion derived, perhaps, from the fame of those experiments which his physical knowledge might have enabled him to display; but which, however obtained, certainly prevailed; for we learn from Josephus, that one named Eleazar, in the presence of Vespasian and others, pretended to release persons possessed from the power of demons, by means of a ring, bearing an impression of a root, which had been pointed out by Solomon, and adjured them, in the name of Solomon, not to return; at the same time reciting an incantation composed by him⁶. Amidst the superstitious notions, also, which long afterwards continued to delude the eastern nations, we find such imaginary

Diseases, of which the most excellent axioms were inscribed on the vestibule of the temple of Jerusalem.

⁵ Joseph. *Antiq. lib. viii. cap. ii. p. 340*. Josephus grounds the authenticity of these letters on Jewish and Tyrian records. Some suspected circumstances have been mentioned, as impeaching their claims: particularly it has been observed, that Hiram speaks of Tyre as an island, whereas old Tyre, which was contemporary with this period, was situated on the continent; but the word יִם seems to be applied to ancient Tyre in Isaiah xxiii. 2—6. Vide Parkhurst's *Lexicon*, Root יִם.

⁶ Joseph. *Antiq. lib. viii. cap. ii. p. 339*.

influence over evil spirits ascribed to the name Solomon.

The Septuagint, and other versions of this book differ occasionally from the Hebrew original, and contain, indeed more proverbs, some of which are to be found, also, in the Book of Ecclesiasticus. The order, likewise, of the poetical books is different in the Septuagint⁷, and in some manuscripts; where the metrical books run thus, Psalms, Job, and Proverbs.

⁷ Codex Alexand. Vid. Grabe in Prolog. cap. i. § 2. Melito apud Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. iv. cap. 26. p. 147. Edit. Paris, 1659.

OF THE
BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES;
OR, THE
P R E A C H E R.

THIS Book was unquestionably the production of Solomon, who for the great excellency of his instructions was emphatically styled "the Preacher." It is said by the Jews to have been written by him, upon his awakening to repentance¹, after he had been seduced, in the decline of life, to idolatry and sin, and had illustrated the failure of ill-directed pursuits; and if this be true, it affords valuable proofs of the sincerity with which he regretted his departure from righteousness. Some, however, have ascribed the work to Isaiah². The Talmudists pretend that Hezekiah was the author of it³; and Grotius, upon some vague conjectures, conceives that it was composed by order of

¹ Seder Olam Rabba, c. xv. p. 41. Hieron. in Eccles. i. 12. Vid. also, ch. ii. 10. vii. 26.

² R. Moses Kimchi. R. Gedalies in Schalsch Hakkab. fol. 66.

³ Bava Bathra, c. i. f. 15. The Talmudists suppose Hezekiah to have produced, or compiled, the three books of Solomon, as likewise the Book of Isaiah. Vid. Peters's Præf. to Dissert. on Job, 8vo. edit.

Zerubbabel⁴. But we shall be convinced that it should be assigned to Solomon, if we consider that the author styles himself "the son of David, the King in Jerusalem," and that he describes his wisdom, his riches, his writings, and his works in a manner applicable only to Solomon⁵; likewise that the book is attributed to him both by Jewish and Christian tradition. The foreign expressions, if they really be such, which induced Grotius to consider the book as a production subsequent to the Babylonish captivity, might have been acquired by Solomon in his intercourse by commerce with other nations, or by his connexion with foreign women⁶. But the style of the work must have often occasioned the introduction of unusual words⁷. The later Jews are said to have been desirous of excluding it from the canon⁸, from some improprieties of representation which they fancied to exist, not considering the scope and design of the author. But when they observed the excellent conclusion, and its consistency with the law, they allowed its pretensions. There

⁴ Grotius in Eccles.

⁵ Chap. i. 1. 12. 16. ii. 4—10. vii. 25—28. viii. 16. xii. 9. See also, 1 Kings viii. 46. compare with ch. vii. 20.

⁶ 1 Kings xi. 1, 2.

⁷ Maimon. More Nevoch. part ii. c. xlvii. Of the words produced as foreign by Grotius, all are now allowed to be genuine Hebrew, except two פֶּשֶׁר viii. 1. and עֵמֶל vi. 7. which were, perhaps, Arabic or Chaldaic expressions in use in the time of Solomon. Vid. Calovius de Prærequisit. Stud. Sac. c. i. sec. 4. p. 93—7. inter Opera. Edit. Witeberg. 1652.

⁸ Maimon. More Nevoch. part ii. c. xxviii. Madrash. Cohel. 14. § Aben Ezra, Eccles. vii. 4. Hieron. in Eccles. xii. 12. tom. ii. p. 788. Gemar in Pirke Abboth, f. 1. col. 1. Some absurdly imagined, that Solomon maintained the eternity of the world in ch. i. 4.

can, indeed, be no doubt of its title to admission: Solomon was eminently distinguished by the illumination of the Divine Spirit, and had even twice witnessed the Divine presence⁹. The tendency of the book is excellent, when rightly understood, and Solomon speaks in it with great clearness of the revealed truths of a future life, and universal judgment.

The book is in the Hebrew denominated "Cohemoth," a word which signifies one who speaks in public¹; and which, indeed, is properly translated by the Greek word Ecclesiastes², or the Preacher. Solomon, as Mr. Desvieux has remarked, seems here to speak in a character similar to that of the sophists among the Greeks; not, indeed, of the sophists when degenerated into subtle and quibbling wranglers, but of the sophists who, in the dignity of their primitive character, blended philosophy and rhetoric³; and made pleasure subservient to instruction, by conveying wisdom with eloquence. Though Solomon is not hereby to be considered as having harangued, like the common orators of his time, yet, as there can be no doubt, that he often publicly instructed his own people and even strangers, who were drawn by his reputation for wisdom to his court⁴, it is not improbable that this discourse was first delivered in public; and, indeed, some passages

⁹ 1 Kings iii. 5. ix. 2. xi. 9.

¹ Some say that the word Cohemoth means a Collector, in the Ethiopic tongue it implies a circle, or company of men.

² Ἐκκλησιαστής. The Hebrew word has, however, a feminine termination in respect to wisdom, personified, as it were, in Solomon; or as abstractedly used, it seems, to imply preaching.

³ Philostratus de Vitis Sophistarum inter λειπόμενα, p. 479. edit. Lipsiæ, 1709. Cicero Orat. lib. i. c. xix. p. 149. edit. Paris, 1740.

⁴ Mercer. Præf. in Eccles.

have been produced from the book in support of this opinion ⁵.

The main scope and tendency of the work have been variously represented. Mr. Desvieux, after an accurate discussion of the different opinions, has pronounced it to be a philosophical discourse ⁶, written in a rhetorical style, and occasionally interspersed with verses ⁷. It may be considered as a kind of enquiry into the chief good; an enquiry conducted on sound principles, and terminating in a conclusion which all, on mature reflection, will approve. The great object of Solomon appears to have been, from a comprehensive consideration of the circumstances of human life, to demonstrate the errors of men and the vanity of all secular pursuits. He endeavours to illustrate by a just estimate, the insufficiency of earthly enjoyment; not with design to excite in us a disgust at life ⁸, but to influence us to prepare for that state where there is no vanity ⁹. With this view, the Preacher affirms, that man's labour, as far as it has respect only to present objects, is vain and unprofitable ¹; that however prosperous and flattering circumstances may appear, yet, as he could from experience assert, neither knowledge, nor pleasure, nor

⁵ Chap. xii. 9. 12. Gregor. Mag. lib. iv. Dial. c. iv. tom. iii. p. 315. edit. Antwerp. 1615.

⁶ Desvieux, Philosophical and Critical Essays on Eccles.

⁷ The Jews do not admit that Ecclesiastes should be considered as a poetical work.

⁸ The Manichæans, not considering that human pursuits are only so far vain as they terminate in a present object, maintained the existence of an evil principle.

⁹ August. de Civit. Dei, l. 20. c. iii. p. 575. Hieron. Com. in Eccles.

¹ Compare Eccles. i. 2. with Persius Sat. I. line 1.

magnificence, nor greatness, nor uncontrolled indulgence, can satisfy the desires of man²; that the solicitude with which some men toil and heap up possessions for descendants often unworthy, is especial vexation; that it is better far to derive such enjoyment from the gifts of Providence, as they are designed to afford, by being rendered subservient to good actions³.

Solomon proceeds to observe, that in this life, "iniquity usurps the place of righteousness;" that man appears in some respects to have "no pre-eminence above the beast" that perishes⁴; and that the consideration of these circumstances may at first sight lead to wrong conclusions concerning the value of life; but that God should not be hastily arraigned, for that "he that is higher than the highest, regardeth;" and from this state of things he intimates his expectation of a future judgment. That even here, those who "pervert judgment," are not satisfied by abundance, "but that the sleep of the labouring man is sweet⁵." He remarks, that though the hearts of men be encouraged in evil by the delay of God's sentence, and though the

² Gregor. Nyssen. *Homilia in Eccles.* t. i. p. 375. edit. Par. 1638. Salen. *Dial. in Eccles. Bib.* Petav. in *Eccles.* tom. i. col. 147. Castet. *Præf. in Eccles.* Collyer's *Sacred Interp.* vol. i. p. 339. Prior's Solomon.

³ Chap. iii. 12. Solomon recommends a moderate enjoyment of the good gifts of Providence, and thinks such enjoyment more reasonable than an inordinate pursuit after riches, or than those labours from which no advantage should result to ourselves. *Vid.* *Eccles.* ii. 24. viii. 15. ix. 7—9. *Acts* xiv. 17. *1 Tim.* iv. 4. *Drusius in Eccles.* i. 1. *Geier. Prol. in Eccles.* *Horace Carm. lib.* ii. ode ii. l. 1—4. and *Wells's Help to the Understanding of the Holy Scriptures.*

⁴ Chap. iii. 3. 19.

⁵ Chap. iii.—vi.

days of the sinner may be prolonged on earth, yet that, finally, it shall be well only with them who fear God ⁶. He then sums up his exhortations to good deeds, and to a remembrance of the Creator in the days of youth, "or ever the silver cord of life be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken ⁷;" when "the dust shall return to the earth, and the spirit unto God who gave it." And the inspired teacher bids us "hear the conclusion of the whole matter," which is, "to fear God, and to keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man: for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil ⁸."

⁶ Chap. viii. 11—13.

⁷ Chap. xii. 5, 6. By the silver cord, of which Solomon speaks in this figurative description of old age, some understand the humours of the body, which are, as it were, *the thread of life*. But the most judicious writers consider it as an elegant expression for the spinal marrow, with the nerves arising from it, and the filaments, fibres, and tendons that proceed from them. This white cord is loosened (or shrunk up) when it is no longer full of spirits. The golden bowl is supposed to mean the pia mater. This membrane, which covers the brain, is of a yellowish colour. For farther explanation of this beautiful allegory, consult commentators, and Smith's *Γηροκομία Βασιλική*.

⁸ De Sacy Avertis. sur l'Eccles. De Launey, sur l'Eccles. xii. 15. Harduin Paraph. sur l'Eccles. Witsii Miscel. Sac. lib. i. c. xviii. § 36, 37. p. 227, 8. The whole force of Solomon's reasoning rests on the doctrine of a future judgment as maintained in ch. xii. 13, 14, and before in chap. iii. 17. vii. 1. 12. xi. 9. He had admitted that as to this life, there was but "one event to the righteous and to the wicked," ch. ix. 1—3. The seven following verses in the ninth chapter are sometimes supposed to be spoken in the assumed character of an Epicurean. Compare ch. ix. 4—10. with Wisd. ii. 1—11. But Solomon might, consistently with the scope of his own discourse, maintain that the only hope of man is during life, and

In the course of his discussion of this subject, Solomon deviates into some remarks incidentally suggested, in order to preclude objections, and to prevent false conclusions. It is, therefore, necessary always to keep in mind the purport and design of the discourse, which is carried on, not in a chain of regular deductions and logical consequences, but in a popular and desultory manner; and the connection of the reasoning is often kept up by almost imperceptible links. It is necessary also to examine what Solomon states as his first doubts and hasty thoughts, corrected by his cooler judgment; and to distinguish what he says for himself, from what he urges in an assumed character; for though the book be not, as some have imagined⁹, a dialogue between a pious person, and one who maintained notions similar to those afterwards professed by the Sadducees; yet in the course of the work the Preacher starts and answers objections; takes up the probable opinions, as it were,

that in this respect, the most wretched being, *a living dog*, is better than the greatest monarch, *a dead lion*; for the living having the prospect of death may prepare for it, but the dead have no more opportunity of working out a reward; that the gratification of their passions is then perished, and that they have no longer a portion on earth. Hence Solomon proceeds to exhort to a discreet enjoyment and to active exertion, for that wisdom would find no employment in the grave; that in this life there is no equal distribution, and that the time of departure from it is uncertain. Solomon concludes the chapter with a lively illustration of the final advantage, and deliverance to be produced by humble wisdom, however overlooked and despised in the present life. Vid. chap. ix. 4—18.

⁹ Sentimens de quelques Theolog. sur l'Hist. Crit. du P. R. Simon. Amstel. 1682, lett. xii. 272. F. Yeard's Paraphrase on Eccles. Lond. 1701. Some writers maintain, that all these passages which are considered as objectionable, will admit of a good sense in consistency with the design of Solomon's discourse.

of an encircling crowd ; and sometimes admits, by way of concession, what he afterwards proves to be false¹. We must be careful, therefore, not to extend those principles which Solomon grants, beyond their due bounds, nor to understand them in a different sense from that in which they are admitted by him. From want of due consideration of these circumstances and laws, the sentiments of Solomon have often been perverted to countenance false and pernicious opinions²; and from want of attention to the design of the book, as here described, some writers have had recourse to very extraordinary means of reconciling particular passages with the main scope and pious conclusion of the work. Hence to vindicate it from any imputations of bad tendency, Olympiodorus maintained that Solomon speaks only of natural things in the book, though he intersperses a few moral sentiments ; and St. Augustin endeavours to explain it by having recourse to allegory ; but such solutions are not worthy of much attention ; and what has been said will sufficiently account for all difficulties that may occur in considering the work. We need but recollect, that the style of the book is particularly obscure and vague, though unadorned and prosaic ; that the question itself which is considered, is embarrassed with difficulties ; and that the desultory mode of argument is liable to be mistaken, where various opinions are introduced ; and when the author

¹ Castel. Præf. in Eccles. Not. Philol. Adv. Script. Loc. in Eccles. iii. Dubardin. Reflect. Moral. sur l'Eccles. Gregor. Mag. dial. iv. c. iv. tom. iii. p. 315.

² Witsius Miscel. Sac. lib. i. c. xviii. p. 226. edit. Amstel. 1695. R. Gerherd. in Exeg. Loc. de Script. p. 156. and Præf. in Com. t. iii. s. 231. Lowth's Prælect. Poet. 24.

diversifies his character, without accurately discriminating serious from ironical remarks, or objections from his answers. It must, however, be wilful delusion, or perverse sophistry, which selects partial extracts for the encouragement of sin, where the dispassionate and rational enquirer after truth will find genuine wisdom and deliberate piety.

OF THE
SONG OF SOLOMON.

THE Talmudists have attributed this Book to Hezekiah¹; some writers, with as little reason, have assigned it to Isaiah; and others to Ezra. There are, however, no grounds that should influence us to reject the authority of the Hebrew title², which ascribes it to Solomon; and, indeed, it is now almost universally allowed to have been the work of that monarch, and some consider it as his Epithalamium, or Marriage Song³, composed on the celebration of his nuptials with a very beautiful woman, called Shulamite, as some suppose, the daughter of Pharaoh, the favourite and distinguished wife of Solomon⁴, or as others

¹ Bava Bathra. R. Moses Kimchi.

² The Chaldee Paraphrase has this title, "The Songs and Hymns which Solomon the Prophet, the King of Israel, uttered in the spirit of Prophecy before the Lord." Some writers consider the Song as composed of a series of unconnected idyls.

³ Chap. i. 4. ii. 16. iii. 4. 7. 11. Vid. also, chap. viii. 5. where Michaelis, instead of "thy mother brought thee forth," reads, "thy mother betrothed thee." Vid. Not. in Lowth's *Prælect.* 30.

⁴ 1 Kings iii. 1—7. ix. 16—24. Cant. vi. 13. Cornel. a Lapid. Prol. c. i. Lightfoot, *Chron. &c.* p. 5. Harmer's *Com.* p. 27—44. There is some ground to maintain that the work was written long

conceive, a Jewish wife, called a Salemitess (from Salem ⁵).

Solomon was eminently skilful in the composition of songs, and he is related to have produced above a thousand ⁶; of which number, probably, this only was attributed to the suggestion of the Holy Spirit, as it alone has escaped the waste of time ⁷, by being preserved in the consecrated volume of the Scriptures; into which it was received as unquestionably authentic: and it has since been uniformly considered as canonical by the Christian Church.

after the marriage with Pharaoh's daughter; vii. 4. compare with 1 Kings vi. 38. vii. 2. iii. 1. Hence some have imagined her to be a Jewish, and some a Tyrian woman. The bride's mother is mentioned as at the court of Solomon; ch. iii. 4. viii. 2—5. and her youngest sister is spoken of, ch. viii. 8; see Dr. Percy's new Translation of Solomon's Song. Harmer, however, supposes a former wife of Solomon to speak in the first instances, and that the vineyard mentioned in ch. viii. 12. was Gezer, which Pharaoh is said in 1 Kings ix. 16, 17. to have "given for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife." The bride calls herself black, though she represents her darkness as the consequence of exposure to the sun; and Volney maintains, from a passage in Herodotus, and his own observation, that the ancient Egyptians were black. *Voyage en Syrie et Egypt*, vol. i. p. 175. If a Gentile woman, she was more appositely a figure of the Gentile church; and Patrick has fancifully remarked, that as the word *Sechora* denotes that duskiness which precedes the morning dawn, it may figuratively represent the Gentile darkness which was dispersed before the rising of the Gospel light. The word Shulamite is, perhaps, derived from that of Solomon. Vid. R. Jonathan in Talkut. ad 1. Raam iii. fol. 28. col. 3.

⁵ Cant. iii. 4—10. viii. 5.

⁶ 1 Kings iv. 32. Eccles. xii. 9. In the Septuagint they are said to have been 5000.

⁷ Except, perhaps, some received into the book of Psalms, as possibly the cxxviiith. cxxviiiith. and cxxxiind. Vid. Patrick.

The royal author appears, in the spirit of a period familiar with types, to have designed to render a ceremonial appointment descriptive of a spiritual concern : and Bishop Lowth has with much probability determined, that the song is a mystical allegory ; of that sort which induces a more sublime sense on historical truth, and which, by the description of human events, shadows out divine circumstances⁸. The sacred writers were, by God's condescension, authorized to illustrate his strict and intimate relation to the church by the figure of a marriage⁹; and the emblem must have been strikingly becoming, and expressive to the conceptions of the Jews, since they annexed notions of peculiar mystery to this appointment, and imagined that the marriage union was a counterpart representation of some original pattern in heaven. Hence was it performed among them with very peculiar ceremonies and solemnity; with every thing that could give dignity and importance to its rites¹. Solomon, therefore, in celebrating the circumstances of his marriage, was naturally led by a chain of correspondent reflections, to

⁸ Lowth's *Præl. Poet.* 31. Some have conceived it to be entirely spiritual. Calovius *Annotata ad Canticum.* August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xvii. cap. xx. p. 485. Bernard *Serm. i. in Cant.* p. 1273. vol. i. edit. Paris, 1719. Glass. *Philol. Sac. lib. v. cap. xx. p. 1959.* edit. Lips. 1713 : but it apparently had a reference to an actual marriage. The book is full of allusions to the circumstances of the marriage ceremony among the Jews. There are particulars which apply only to the literal sense, as there are others which correspond only with the figurative interpretation.

⁹ Ezek. xvi. xxiii. 1—3. 5—44. Isaiah lxii. 5. Hosea iii. Matt. ix. 15. John iii. 29.

¹ Cudworth's *Tipheret*, and *Malcuth.* and Patrick's *Preface.* Selden *Uxor Ebraica.* Buxtorf, &c.

consider that spiritual connexion which it was often employed to symbolize ; and the idea must have been more forcibly suggested to him, as he had recently built, or was at this period preparing to build, a temple to God, and thereby to furnish a visible representation of the Hebrew church.

If this account be admitted, there is no reason why we should not suppose that the Holy Spirit might have assisted Solomon to render this spiritual allegory prophetic of that future connexion which was to subsist with more immediate intercourse between Christ and the church, which he should personally consecrate as his bride. If the predominant idea which operated on the mind of Solomon, was only that of an affinity which at all times was supposed to exist between God and the Hebrew church ; yet as that church was itself the type of a more perfect institution, the descriptive representation of Solomon had necessarily a prophetic character ; and the sacred Spirit seems to have often suggested allusions and expressions more adapted to the second, than to the first establishment. Whether the song, however, were typically or directly prophetic, it is unquestionable that this elegant composition had a predictive as well as a figurative character. The whole of it is a thin veil of allegory thrown over a spiritual alliance ; and we discover every where, through the transparent types of Solomon and his bride, the characters of Christ, and his personified church ; portrayed in the eastern style not easily translated, with those graces and embellishments which are most lovely and engaging to the human eye.

This spiritual allegory, thus worked up by Solomon to its highest perfection, was very consistent with the

prophetic style, which was accustomed to predict evangelical blessings by such parabolical figures; and Solomon is by some supposed to have been more immediately presented with a pattern for this allusive representation by the author of the forty-fifth Psalm, who describes, in a compendious allegory, the same future connexion between Christ and his church ².

It was the want of sufficient attention to this character in the Song of Solomon, which is, perhaps, the most figurative part of Scripture, that first induced the rabbinical writers to dispute its authority, in contradiction to the sentiment of the earlier Jews, who never questioned its title to a place in the canon ³. It must, likewise, have been a perverse disregard to its spiritual import, which occasioned even some Christian authors to consider it with unbecoming and irreverent free-

² The forty-fifth Psalm has not, however, any very obvious and direct application to the character and circumstances of Solomon; and if it was written on the occasion of Solomon's marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh, the immediate subject is referred to, only by slight and doubtful allusions. Its principal, if not its direct object, seems to be the Messiah riding on to victory; and establishing, in his ineffable union with the Church (described as a bride), his final triumph. See the Psalm, ver. 2. compare with Luke iv. 22. ver. 3. with Heb. iv. 12. ver. 4. with Rev. vi. 2. ver. 6 and 7. with Heb. i. 8, 9. ver 17. with 1 Peter ii. 9. See also, Isaiah lxiii. 1—6. Bishop Horsley's Sermons, vol. i. p. 83.

³ Though not expressly mentioned by Philo or Josephus, it must have been one of the twenty-two books reckoned as canonical by the latter. It was in the earliest catalogues of the sacred books received by the Christian church, in that of Melito, in his letter written to Onesimus, about A.D. 140. and in Origen's catalogue. Vid. Euseb. Hist. lib. iv. cap. xxvi. lib. vi. cap. xxv. and in the canon received by the council of Laodicea, can. 59.

dom⁴. It has been weakly objected, by those who would invalidate its pretensions, that the name of God is not mentioned throughout the work; but this observation must have arisen from want of due reflection on the design of the author, which was to adumbrate Divine instruction, and not directly to inculcate what other parts of Scripture so abundantly describe. There is, in fact, no reason to question its pretensions to be considered as an inspired book, since it was indisputably in the Hebrew canon and translated into Greek; and is seemingly referred to, if not absolutely cited by Christ and his apostles⁵, who, as well as the sacred writers of the Old Testament⁶, take up its allusions, and pursue its allegory⁷.

But though the work be certainly an allegorical representation, it must be confessed that many learned men, in an unrestrained eagerness to explain the song, even in its minutest and most obscure particulars, have too far indulged their imaginations; and by endeavouring too nicely to reconcile the literal with the spiritual sense, have been led beyond the boundaries which a

⁴ As Grotius, and even the learned Michaelis, who has certainly given too much scope to fancy in his remarks on this book. Vid. Not. in Lowth's *Prælect.* 30.

⁵ Comp. Cant. iv. 7. with Ephes. v. 27. Cant. viii. 11. with Matt. xxi. 33. Cant. i. 4. with John vi. 44. Cant. v. 2. with Revel. iii. 20. Cant. vii. 1. with Isaiah lii. 7. See also, John iii. 29. et J. C. Wolfii *Bibliothec. Hebræ. pars 2. de Libris Biblicis*, p. 105. edit. Hamburg, 1721. Huetius, *Prop.* iv. &c.

⁶ Isaiah liv. 5. lxi. 10. lxii. 4, 5. Ezek. xvi. and xxiii. Hos. ii. 16. 19. and Prophets, *passim*.

⁷ Matt. ix. 15. xxii. 2. 25. John iii. 29. 2 Cor. xi. 2. Gal. iv. 22—31. Ephes. v. 23—27. Revel. xix. 7. xxii. 17.

reverence for the sacred writings should ever prescribe. The representations which the inspired writers afford concerning the mystical relation between Christ and his church⁸, though well accommodated to our apprehensions, by the allusion of a marriage union, are too general to illustrate every particular contained in this poem; which may be supposed to have been intentionally decorated with some ornaments appropriate to the literal construction. When the general analogy is obvious, we are not always to expect minute resemblance, and should not be too curious in seeking for obscure and recondite allusions. The Jews prudently forbade their children to read it till their judgment was matured⁹, lest, in the fervour of youth, they should give too wide a scope to fancy, and interpret to a bad sense the allusive imagery and spiritual ideas of Solomon. The book, though placed last in order of his works, appears to have been written by that monarch in his youth; in the full warmth of a luxuriant imagination¹. Solomon, in the glow of an inspired fancy, and unsuspecting of misconception or deliberate perversion, describes God and his church, with their respective attributes and graces, under colourings familiar and agreeable to mankind, and exhibits their ardent affection under the authorized figures of earthly love.

⁸ Ephes. v. 32.

⁹ And the same restriction prevailed in the primitive Christian church. Vid. Origen. Prol. in Canticum, tom. iii. p. 32. Hieron. in Ezech. Prolog. in Ezek. tom. iii. p. 698. Theodor. Oper. tom. i. p. 998. Wolf. Bib. Hebr. p. 126.

¹ Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter towards the beginning of his reign. Vid. 1 Kings iii. 1.

No similitude, indeed, could be chosen so elegant and apposite for the illustration of this intimate and spiritual alliance, as the marriage union: if considered in the chaste simplicity of its first institution; or under the interesting circumstances with which it was established among the Jews².

Those who imagine that Solomon has introduced into this hymeneal song, some representations inconsistent with the refinement of spiritual allegory, do not sufficiently consider that the strongest affections of the mind, if properly directed, are chaste and honourable. The reciprocal description of the bridegroom and bride, and the impassioned language in which they expressed their mutual attachment, are compatible with the strictest purity of imagination; and are employed to represent respectively, spiritual perfections, and spiritual passions, with the greatest propriety, though with occasional obscurity of allusion. The figures and expressions of Solomon have, indeed, lost their original dignity and decorum, because they have in later times been often abused to a fulsome and depraved sense. The judicious reader will, however, carefully discriminate between the genuine import of language, and its perverted application. The sentiments, likewise, of Solomon, were unquestionably chastened with that reserve and delicacy which, among the Jews, was attached to the consideration of the marriage union; and the book does not appear to contain any reference

² Calmet. Dissert. sur les Mariages des Hébreux. See also, Sir William Jones's Dissertation on the Mystical Poetry of the Persians and the Hindûs. Asiat. Research. vol. iii.

offensive to that character of the institution which rendered it an apt representation of the sacred connexion³.

This book may be considered, as to its form, as a dramatic poem of the pastoral kind. There is a succession of time, and a change of place, to different parts of the palace and royal gardens. The personages introduced as speakers are the bridegroom and bride, with their respective attendants; together, as some suppose, with the sister of the bride⁴; and if the ingenious theory of Harmer be admitted, the first and degraded wife of Solomon⁵, whom he regards as the figure of the Jewish church. There is certainly an interchange of dialogue, carried on in a wild and digressive manner, and the speeches are characteristic, and adapted to the persons with appropriate elegance. The companions of the bride compose a kind of chorus, which seems to bear some resemblance to that which afterwards sustained so important a part in the Grecian tragedy⁶. Solomon and his queen sometimes speak in

³ Origen. ap. Hieron. tom. v. p. 603. edit. Paris, 1706. Greg. Nazianz. Orat. i. p. 98. tom. ii. edit. Par. 1630.

⁴ If the bride herself be considered as the figure of the Christian church at Jerusalem, the sister may be supposed to represent the Gentile church rising into notice. The bridegroom, when consulted upon what should be done for this sister, gives a figurative account of the measures which should be taken to preserve her purity and safety. Some attribute the tenth verse to the bride; and some to the sister, professing to have derived strength from the countenance of the bridegroom. Vid. chap. viii. 8—10.

⁵ Chap. ii. 5. iii. 1. Harm. Com. p. 44, &c.

⁶ The original chorus of the Greeks, which was the foundation on which their drama was built, was an institution of a religious character; and it might possibly have been derived from an intimation of some

assumed characters, and represent themselves under fictitious circumstances. They descend, as it were, from the throne; and adopt with the pastoral dress, that simplicity of language which is favourable to the communication of their sentiments⁷. The style, however, is not more simple than elegant. The poem, indeed, abounds throughout with beauties, and presents everywhere a delightful and romantic display of nature, painted at its most interesting season⁸, with all the enthusiasm of poetry, and described with every ornament that an inventive fancy could furnish. The images that embellish it, are chiefly drawn from the state of pastoral life in which the Jews were much occupied; and to which Solomon, mindful of his father's condition, must have looked with peculiar fond-

sacred appointment among the Jews, whose singers in the temple service composed a sort of chorus.

⁷ This book was certainly known to Theocritus, who was a contemporary with the Septuagint translators; and who might have been made acquainted with it by Ptolemy Philadelphus, whose patronage and regard for literature the poet celebrates. It is evident that many expressions, images, and sentiments in the *Idyllia*, are copied from the sacred poem. *Comp. Cant. i. 9. with Theoc. xviii. 30. Cant. vi. 10. with Theoc. xviii. 26. Cant. iv. 11. with Theoc. xx. 26, 27. Cant. iv. 15. with Theoc. i. 7, 8. Cant. ii. 15. with Theoc. i. 48, 49. Cant. i. 7. with Theoc. ii. 69. Cant. v. 2. with Theoc. ii. 127. Cant. viii. 6, 7. with Theoc. ii. 133, 134. and Theoc. vii. 56. Cant. ii. 8, 9. with Theoc. viii. 88, 89. Cant. viii. 7. with Theoc. xxiii. 25, 26. Vid. Joan. Euseb. de Orig. Sacr. Scrip. lib. vii. c. 7. p. 201. edit. Lugdun. 1641. Wesley in Job, Diss. iv.*

⁸ Harmer, from a consideration of the scenery here described, supposes the marriage to have been celebrated in the spring, when "the tender grape" began to appear, towards the latter end of April. See *Com. p. 154, 155.*

ness. It is justly entitled, “a song of songs,” or most excellent song; as superior to any composition that an uninspired writer could ever have produced; a song which, if properly understood, must tend to purify the mind, and to elevate the affections from earthly to heavenly things. The book is certainly composed with metrical arrangement. The Jews admit its title to be considered as a poem, though not, indeed, on account of its structure or measure, but because they regard it as a parable, which, according to Abarbenel, constitutes one species of the canticle, or song⁹.

There have been many different divisions of the book; some conceive that it naturally breaks out into seven parts; and the learned Bossuet has observed that it describes the seven days which the nuptial ceremony¹, (as indeed, almost all solemnities among the Jews) lasted; during which time select virgins attended the bride, as the bridegroom was accompanied by his chosen friends².

⁹ The Masoretic writers, who seem to have been but little acquainted with the nature of the ancient Hebrew measure, admitted that the Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, were metrical, and marked them particularly as such. But other books, equally metrical, as the Canticles, and the Lamentations, they noted with prosaic accentuation; and the Jews consider these books as prosaic compositions. Vid. Mantissa. Diss. ad Lib. Cosri, p. 413.

¹ Gen. xxix. 27. Judg. xiv. 15. 17. Tobit viii. 19, 20.

² Cant. i. 4. ii. 7. v. 1. Judg. xiv. 11. Psalm xlv. 14. Matt. ix. 15. xxv. 1. John iii. 29. The friends of the bridegroom may be considered as the representatives of angels, prophets, and apostles; and the friends of the bride are figurative, perhaps, of the followers of the church. They are called the daughters of Jerusalem.

Bossuet's distribution of the work is as follows ³.

The first day,	chap. i.	——	ii.	6.	
second day,	chap. ii.	7.	——	17.	
third day,	chap. iii.	——	v.	1.	
fourth day,	chap. v.	2.	——	vi.	9.
fifth day,	chap. vi.	10.	——	vii.	11.
sixth day,	chap. vii.	12.	——	viii.	3.
seventh day,	chap. viii.	4.	——		14.

Bossuet supposes the seventh day to be the sabbath, because the bridegroom is not represented as going out to his usual occupations. This division is at least probable, and it throws some light on the book. Some have conceived ⁴, that these periods are figurative of seven analogous and correspondent ages that may be supposed to extend from Christ to the end of the world: which is a very unauthorized conjecture, and justly rejected by the most judicious commentators.

³ Bossuet's *Præf. et Com. in Cant. and New Trans. of Solomon's Song*: the learned author of which characterizes the seven days by a different division.

⁴ As Cocceius.

GENERAL PREFACE

TO THE

PROPHETS.

THE second of those great divisions under which the Jews classed the books of the Old Testament was that of the prophets¹. This, as has been before observed², comprehended originally thirteen books; but the Talmudical doctors³ rejecting Ruth, Job, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Chronicles, as hagiographical, reckon only eight prophetical books; calling those of Joshua, of Judges, of Samuel, and of Kings, the four books of the former prophets; and those of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve lesser Prophets (comprised in one) as the four books of the later Prophets. By these means they deprive some books of a rank to which they are entitled; and by parting Ruth, Nehemiah, and Lamentations from the books to which they were severally united, enlarge the apparent number of their canonical books. As the rabbinical notions concerning the degrees of inspiration cannot be allowed to affect the dignity of any of the

¹ Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. p. 1333. edit. Hudson.

² Introduct. p. 9.

³ Bava Bathra, c. i.

sacred writings ⁴; and as the pretensions of every book are severally considered in a separate chapter, it is unnecessary to examine the propriety of such an arrangement in this preface; in which it is designed to treat in a general way, of the character of the prophets, and of the nature and evidence of that inspiration, under the influence of which they wrote ⁵.

The Prophets were those illustrious persons who were raised up by God among the Israelites, as the ministers of his dispensations. They flourished in a continued succession for above a thousand years ⁶; all co-operating in the same designs, and conspiring in one spirit to deliver the same doctrines, and to prophesy concerning the same future blessings. Moses, the first and greatest of the Prophets, having established God's first covenant, those who followed him were employed in explaining its nature; in opening its spiritual meaning; in instructing the Jews; and in preparing them for the reception of that second dispensation ⁷ which the former prefigured. Their pretensions to be considered as God's appointed servants, were demonstrated by the unimpeachable integrity of their characters; by the intrinsic excellence and tendency of their instruction ⁸; and by the disinterested zeal, and undaunted fortitude ⁹, with which they persevered in their great designs. Their claims were still farther confirmed by

⁴ Glassius Disput. I. in Psalm ex.

⁵ Introduction, p. 9, 10.

⁶ Luke i. 70. reckoning from Moses to Malachi.

⁷ Matt. xi. 13. 1 Macc. iv. 46. Cosri Maam. iii. § 39. Massec. Sotah, cap. ult. Maimon. Bartiner. Gem. Sanh. cap. i. § 3.

⁸ Deut. xiii. 1—3.

⁹ Origen, cont. Cels. lib. vii. p. 336. edit. Cant.

the miraculous proofs which they displayed of Divine support¹, and by the immediate completion of many less important predictions which they uttered². Such were the credentials of their exalted character, which the Prophets brought forward to their contemporaries; and we, who having lived to witness the appearance of the second dispensation, can look back to the connection which subsisted between the two covenants, receive additional evidence of the inspiration of the prophets, in the attestations of our Saviour and his apostles³; and in the retrospect of a germinant and gradually maturing scheme of prophecy, connected in all its parts, and ratified in the accomplishment of its great object, the advent of the Messiah. We have still farther incontrovertible proof of the Divine appointment of these holy men, in the numerous predictions which in these later days are fulfilled, and in those which still, under our own eyes, continue to receive their completion.

Though many persons are mentioned in Scripture as Prophets, and the Talmudists reckon up fifty-five⁴, whom they conceive to have been entitled to this distinction, we are concerned only with those whose books have been admitted into the canon; who are eminently styled prophets⁵, as they were unquestionably inspired

¹ Josh. x. 13. 1 Sam. xii. 14. 18. 2 Kings i. 10. Isa. xxxviii. 8.

² Deut. xviii. 22. 1 Sam. ix. 6. 1 Kings xiii. 3. Isa. xlii. 9. Jerem. xxviii. 9. Ezek. xxxiii. 33.

³ Luke i. 70. xviii. 31. Acts vii. 42. xxiv. 14. Rom. xvi. 26. Ephes. ii. 20. 2 Pet. i. 21.

⁴ Including seven prophetesses. Vid. Gem. Mass. Megil.

⁵ Προφήτης, Prophet, from πρόφημι, to foretel. The sacred writers applied the word נביא, Nabia, with great latitude, as well to

with the knowledge of future events; whose writings have been preserved for the permanent advantage of the church, as descriptive of the economy of the Divine government, as fraught with the lessons of revealed wisdom, and as bearing incontestable evidence to the truth and pretensions of the christian religion.

The nature and character of that inspiration by which the prophets were enabled to communicate Divine instructions and predictions, have been the subject of much disquisition. With respect to the mode by which the Holy Spirit might operate on the understanding of its agents, when employed in the composition of sacred writ, we can form no precise ideas, as we have no acquired experience to assist our conceptions; we can judge of it only by its effects, for of the invisible agency of a Divine power, we can have no adequate apprehension. There is cause, indeed, to suppose that the spirit operated chiefly on the reasoning faculties of the mind, however the imagination might be kindled by its influence. It appears rather to have enlightened the intellect than to have inflamed the fancy⁶. The Prophets themselves, as men, neither visionary nor enthusiastic in their previous character, and as not acting under the bias of any gloomy or superstitious notions, were not liable to be deceived by the delusions of a

false prophets, as to those idolatrous priests whom they called prophets of the grove. Vide 1 Kings xviii. 19. 22. It appears, likewise, to have been sometimes used in the same loose sense as that in which *Προφήτης* is employed by St. Paul synonymously with the Latin word *Vates*, a musician, a poet, or prophet. Vide Titus i. 12. Selden, de Synedr. lib. iii. c. 6. tom. i. p. 1650. Maimon. More Nevoch, p. iii. c. xxix.

⁶ Maimon. More Nevoch, p. ii. c. xxxvi. p. 292. edit. Buxtorf. 1629.

clouded or intemperate imagination⁷. They must, themselves, by the strong effects of the Divine impulse, have been sensible of a supernatural control, and they must have been capable of deciding on its character by the clear and distinct impressions which they received. They could not but have been convinced of their own inspiration by the discoveries of an enlightened mind, as well as by that spontaneous and unwonted facility with which they delivered their important convictions. The people also had a criterion to judge of the truth of their pretensions; since if the signs of immediate accomplishment, which they uttered, were not fulfilled, or if their instructions were delivered in the name of false divinities, and with design to promote the service of other gods, they were to be rejected⁸.

As to the extent of this inspiration, and whether we are to consider it as general or restricted, it must be remarked, that as it would be absurd to suppose that the Spirit guided the prophets only by occasional and desultory starts, and partially enlightened them by imperfect communications, we cannot but admit them to have been uniformly under its influence; and, in consequence, to have been invariably preserved from deception and error, when engaged in the composition of the sacred books. The Spirit did not certainly deprive them of the use of their faculties, so as to render them the mere instruments of conveying the voice of God; but it superintended and guided them in the exercise of their own understandings; sometimes instructing them by immediate revelation, and sometimes

⁷ Geom. Schab. Zohar. col. 408.

⁸ Deut. xiii. 1—3. xviii. 20—22.

directing them in the mode of imparting to others that knowledge which they had derived from the ordinary sources of intelligence ⁹.

We are authorised, it is true, by Scripture, to conclude that the Holy Ghost (who, in his appropriate character, was more immediately an agent in communicating inspiration ¹), did, indeed, “speak by the prophets;” but we are not, therefore, to consider the spirit of inspiration as one person of the ever-glorious Trinity, dictating to the sacred writers every sentence and expression of Scripture; but rather as a peculiar gift of the Holy Ghost, a Divine influence which opened their understandings to a limited discernment of the will of God.

This miraculous power may be represented to our conceptions, as to its effects, under different points of view; it may be described, first, as analogous to a light shining on the minds of the prophets, and dispersing those mists, which the corruption of human nature had engendered; which enabled them to read those natural principles that were originally engraven on the mind; which awakened their faculties to a more lively perception of truth, and assisted their reason to act free from prejudice and restraint. It must be considered still farther, as instructing them by an influx of Divine knowledge, in the truths which could be obtained only by immediate information from God; or under one collective description, it may be represented as guiding and conducting the prophets, by various means to the

⁹ Secker's first Sermon on the inspiration of Scripture.

¹ Mark xii. 36. Acts i. 16. xxviii. 25. Heb. iii. 7. ix. 8. 2 Pet. i. 21.

apprehension of all requisite truth, human and Divine. When they wrote historically, there could be no necessity for a revelation of events of which the knowledge might be obtained by their own observation and inquiries². They recorded what they themselves had seen, or on some occasions, what they had received from unquestionable documents, or credible witnesses, the Spirit, indeed, bearing testimony. The prophets generally take care themselves to inform us what they derived immediately from God : and by different modes of expression to distinguish what they speak in their own characters as recording historical events, or even as reasoning from the doctrines which had been revealed unto them. Still, however, it is not inconsistent to maintain that they wrote under the influence of uniform inspiration ; that is, they were uniformly guided by a Divine spirit, which enabled them, by various means of intelligence, to discover truth ; and to select and record with sincerity what might be subservient to their designs. And whenever they communicated Divine instruction concerning the attributes and designs of God, describing particulars which could not be the objects of human sagacity or memory ; they must have derived their knowledge by positive revelation from above³.

Divine revelations were obtained by various ways ;

² The prophets were, however, sometimes enabled to describe past events by immediate revelation ; and the word prophecy is applied to the discovery of past circumstances thus obtained. Vide 1 Sam. ix. 20. 2 Kings v. 25, 26. Dan. iv. 20. John iv. 18, 19. Huet. Demonstrat. Evan. Defin. iv. p. 6. Witsius de Prophet. lib. i. cap. ii.

³ Stackhouse's Preface to the Hist. of Bible, p. 26.

for without dilating on the internal irradiation above mentioned, and without following the Jewish writers⁴ in their distinctions concerning the different degrees of inspiration which assisted the authors in the composition of the prophetical or hagiographical books respectively⁵, we may observe, in agreement with the accounts of Scripture, that though the Divine revelations were all equally infallible, yet that a greater degree of illumination was imparted to some persons than to others⁶; and that this conferred a proportionate dignity on the prophet so favoured. The more important communications were likewise sometimes furnished with more conspicuous evidence of revelation, as the dispensation imparted to Moses was introduced with a correspondent display, and superior solemnity. The predictions of Moses were not more certainly fulfilled than those uttered by Isaiah, yet is the former personage positively declared in Scripture by the expression of having conversed with God “face to face⁷,” to have been honoured by a higher revelation, than was Isaiah, or any subsequent prophet, whose illumination was obtained by dreams or visions.

The revelations which are related in Scripture to

⁴ The most learned Jews admit three degrees of inspiration. 1. The *Gradus Mosaicus*. 2. That which is peculiarly called prophecy, and which was obtained by dreams and visions. And 3. That which they call *Ruach Hakkodesh*, by which they suppose the *Hagiographi* to have been inspired. The Jewish notions, however, though sometimes just, are frequently very fanciful. Vide *Maimon. More Nevoch*, pt. ii. c. xlv. p. 315.

⁵ *Abarbenel*, in *Isaiah*. ch. iv. *Maimon. de Fund. Leg.* c. vii.

⁶ *Numb.* xii. 8. *Deut.* xxxiv. 10. *2 Kings* ii. 9. *Heb.* i. 1.

⁷ *Exod.* xxxiii. 11.

have been communicated to the Patriarch, sometimes without any specification of an intermediate agent, and sometimes by the ministry of angels, have been frequently supposed to have been conveyed in dreams and visions, without any actual appearance. But certainly some of the relations respecting these, cannot but be understood in a real and historical sense; as that, for instance, in which God is described as having addressed Adam in Paradise⁸; and that in which the angels are represented to have appeared to, and to have conversed with Abraham⁹; in both of which, as well as in some other cases¹, it must be admitted that the absolute appearance of some Divine personage, the Deity, or his angelical representative, is intended in a strict and positive sense; as it should seem, likewise, that God sometimes addressed his servants by a voice from hea-

⁸ Gen. iii. 8.

⁹ Gen. xviii. also Gen. xvii. 1—3. It is probable that wherever God is said to have appeared, it is to be understood that he appeared by some messenger, the representative of the Divine majesty, and authorised to speak in God's name; this may be collected from John i. 18. and v. 37. Vid. Gen. xvi. 7. 13. xxii. 1. 11. xxxii. 24—30. Judges vi. 11—23. and other places, where the Lord and the angel are words interchangeably used. Vid. August. de Trinit. lib. 1. c. xi. p. 535. vol. viii. It was almost universally believed, in the Christian church, in the earlier ages, that all those Divine appearances described in the Old Testament, whether actual, or in vision, were made by the Logos, or second person of the Trinity. Comp. Isaiah vi. 1. with John xii. 41. Vid. Bull's Defens. Fid. Nic. c. i. § 1. The ancient Jews, likewise, supposed that the intended Messiah appeared as the representative of Jehovah. Vid. Allix. Judg. of the Jew. Church, ch. xiii. xiv. xv. Just. Mart. Dialog. Pars i. p. 249—266. Pars ii. p. 408. edit. Thirlb.

¹ Numb. xxii. 22—35.

ven², without any visible manifestation of himself or his angel.

When communications were obtained from an absolute converse with the Deity, every particular contained in them must have been precisely and distinctly ascertained. And hence the instructions imparted to Moses were so remarkably perspicuous and explicit. No succeeding prophet under the Jewish dispensation could, indeed, boast of such intimate and unreserved correspondence with the Deity as that illustrious Legislator enjoyed; though unquestionably some were favoured with Divine revelations imparted by the ministry of angels; who seem, from the accounts of Scripture, absolutely to have appeared and conversed with them³.

The Jewish writers, however, consider all these relations as descriptive of visionary representations; maintaining that God comprehended in his address to Aaron and Miriam, every mode of revelation by which he designed to enlighten the Prophets that should succeed to Moses⁴.

² Exod. xx. 22. Deut. iv. 12. This mode of revelation was called by the Jews בַּת קוֹל, Bath Col, Filia Vocis, the daughter voice, or daughter of a voice, because it succeeded the oracular voice from the mercy-seat, or because when a voice or thunder proceeded from heaven, an echo, or another voice came out of it. Prideaux supposes superstitious practices to have been grounded on the Jewish notions with respect to this voice, which, however, certainly distinguished the dawn of the Gospel dispensation. Vid. Matt. iii. 17. xvii. 5. John xii. 28, 29. Acts ix. 4—7. Lightfoot and Pirke Eliezer. Glassii Philol. Sac. lib. v. Tract. 1. cap. x. Prid. Connect. book v. p. 257.

³ Joshua v. 13—15. Judges xiii. 3. 13—20. Job xxxviii. 1. Dan. ix. 21, 22.

⁴ Numb. xii. 6. Maimon. More Nevoch. p. ii. c. xli. p. 307.

The institution of the Urim and Thummim, which was coeval with the time of Moses⁵, afforded the means of obtaining Divine information to his contemporaries, as well as to Joshua, and others who succeeded him, till the building of the temple, or possibly till the captivity⁶. As we know not in what manner this mysterious ornament contributed to procure Divine instruction; whether as some have supposed, it imparted intelligence by the brilliancy and configuration of its inscribed characters; or whether, as is most probable, it was the consecrated means appointed for the attainment of answers by an audible voice⁷; we are still certain from the nature and truth of that information, as given upon important occasions, that like all other modes of Divine revelation under the Jewish economy, it was perspicuous and convincing⁸. As far as it was designed to instruct the people in public concerns, it conveyed precise directions; and its predictions of future prosperity or punishment were delivered, not like those of the Pagan oracles, in ambiguous and equivocal language, but in appropriate and express declarations. It is certain, also, that independently of, or in conjunction with those communications which the high priest obtained by the Urim and Thummim, God did convey instruction to others by an articulate

⁵ Exod. xxviii. 30. Numb. xxvii. 21. Mede's Discourse, xxxv.

⁶ It is uncertain when the consultation by the Urim and Thummim ceased. Some think that it was appropriate to the theocracy; some imagine that it was not used after the building of the temple. It continued possibly till the destruction of the temple, and it was expected to revive after the captivity; Ezra ii. 63. Nehem. vii. 65. though probably it did not.

⁷ Judges i. 1. 2 Sam. v. 23, 24.

⁸ 1 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12.

voice, which proceeded from between the two cherubims above the mercy-seat, in the Tabernacle⁹; in a manner allusive possibly to the circumstance of God's speaking by angels.

The other modes by which God vouchsafed to reveal his instructions to the Prophets, were those of dreams and visions¹. With respect to dreams, they were sometimes imparted as admonitions from God to persons who had no title to the prophetic character². In these cases, they were doubtless less distinct in their impression, and rather calculated to strike and amaze, than to enlighten the mind. Those who received them, either waited their explication in the event, or applied for their interpretation to persons who were endued with a portion of the Divine spirit: and the power of explaining dreams appears to have been an eminent characteristic of the Prophets³.

The dreams which revealed future scenes to the imaginations of the Prophets were doubtless very forcible, and evidently predictive. They are supposed by the Jews to have been introduced by the immediate agency of an angel, who either addressed the Prophets by a voice, or pictured representations of events to their minds; but however it might vary in circumstan-

⁹ Exod. xxv. 22. Levit. i. 1. Numb. vii. 89. ix. 9. See also 1 Sam. iii. 3. and following verses.

¹ It is remarkable, that Homer enumerates three modes of obtaining Divine communications, which correspond with those appointed for the conveyance of revelations to God's selected people. Vid. Iliad, lib. i. l. 62, 63.

² Maimon. More Nevoch, par. ii. c. xli. Philo Judæ. *περὶ τοῦ θεοπέμπτους εἶναι τοὺς ὀνείρους*. P. 620. vol. i. edit. Mangey. Gemarists in Barachoth. c. ix. Gen. xl. xli. Dan. iv.

³ Jerem. xxiii. 28.

ces, this mode of communication by dreams must have always conveyed very distinct impressions. When no voice was heard, and information was to be collected from some parabolical scenes, the dreams were probably characterized by a lively and regular succession of objects, and by an accurate display of intelligible particulars. They must have excited respect, as differing widely from the wild and intermediate fancies, the vague and incoherent images that constitute ordinary dreams.

In visions, which the Jews considered as a mode of instruction superior to dreams⁴, the Prophet was convinced of his subjection to a Divine power, by the miraculous suspension of his common faculties; for though on these occasions the inspired person was awake, his senses were entranced⁵, and insensible to all external objects; or so far enraptured as to be alive only to impressions from extatic representations⁶. He was likewise often certified, as in dreams, by distinct admonitions of some particulars readily ascertained, and enabled to foresee some circumstances which immediately came to pass.

In all the cases here described, the Prophets could not, without doubting the clearest and most palpable evidence, distrust the truth of the revelations which they received; and with respect to us, we have ample reason from a collective consideration of their writings, to be convinced that their inspiration was accompanied

⁴ Maim. More Nevoch, par. ii. cap. xlv. and Bayley's Essay on Inspiration.

⁵ Numb. xxiv. 16.

⁶ Isaiah vi. 1. Ezek. xl. 2. Dan. viii. 17, 18. x. 8. Acts x. 11.

with sufficient characters to distinguish it from the dreams of enthusiasm, or the visions of mere fancy ⁷. The accomplishment of their predictions, and the purity of their doctrines, are indeed irrefragable proofs of their Divine appointment to prophesy, and to instruct mankind.

Upon all occasions on which the Prophets are related to have been favoured with an intimation of the Divine will, we find that they betrayed no symptoms of a credulous or heated imagination. Cautious and deliberate in their examination of miraculous revelations, they appear to have hesitated at first, as doubtful of their reality; and they often required a sign, or some additional evidence, to ratify the commission which they received, and to authorise their reliance on the Divine support in its execution. This calm and rational temper, which rendered the Prophets distrustful of their own senses if singly addressed, and solicitous to scrutinize the reality of every appearance, however miraculous in its circumstances, demonstrates clearly that they were not the dupes of their own fancy; and that they expected no reverence for their commission, unless consecrated by the sanctions and authority of Divine appointment; and very striking marks of this disposition were displayed by the Prophets, as may be instanced in the case of Moses ⁸, in that of Samuel ⁹, and in that of Jonah ¹.

Under the immediate influence of the impressions which the Prophets received from these communica-

⁷ Jer. xxxiii. 20. See Isaiah xli. 3. and xlv. 7. Huetius Axioma. p. 12. L. S. Deylingi. Observat. Sac. pars 1. p. 4. edit. Lipsiæ, 1728. Hurd and Smith on Prophecy.

⁸ Exod. iii. and iv.

⁹ 1 Sam. iii.

¹ Jonah i.

tions, they appear to have executed their commission by uttering their instructions with a Divine enthusiasm. Enraptured by the effects of the inspiration which had enlightened their minds, and urged by the efficacy of a controlling power², they delivered their predictions in an animated and impressive manner, and often with some bodily actions and gestures³. These naturally accompanied an earnest delivery of important convictions, and as restricted in consistency with the dignity and venerable deportment of the Prophets, they were very different from those frenzied and extravagant gesticulations by which impostors have sought to recommend and enforce their fantastic rhapsodies⁴.

The word prophecy is often used in Scripture to signify the singing of praises to God; in hymns doubtless of inspired excellence, and occasionally animated with predictions of futurity⁵. The spirit of prophecy, in this sense of the word, appears sometimes by God's permission, to have communicated itself to those who heard others prophesy, the Divine afflatus being conveyed by a kind of sympathy, and harmonious affection⁶.

² Isa. xxi. 3. Jerem. xx. 9. Dan. x. 8. Amos iii. 8.

³ Numb. xxiv. 4. 16. Ezek. iii. 14. Habakkuk iii. 16. R. Albo, lib. iii. c. x. Smith's Disc.

⁴ Chrysost. Homil. xxix. in 1 Cor. Vol. x. p. 257. edit. Paris, 1732. Hieron. Prolog. in Nahum. tom. iii. p. 1559. and Prolog. in Habac. tom. iii. p. 1591. Edit. Paris, 1704. Lucan. lib. v. l. 97—101. Æneid. lib. vi. l. 46—51. Plato in Timæum, p. 90. τῷ δὲ ἐν ἡμῖν θείῳ ξυγγενεῖς εἰσι κινήσεις. Jamb. de Myst. sect. 3. c. ix. Epiphan. adv. Hær. lib. xi. c. 3. p. 404.

⁵ 1 Sam. x. 5. Hammond on Luke i. 67. Numb. xi. 25. The Chaldee Paraphrast translates נְבִיאִים, "praising God." 1 Chron. xxv. 1.

⁶ 1 Sam. x. 5—10. xix. 20—24. Smith's Disc. on Prophecy. And Lowth's Prælect. poet. 18. p. 225.

The Prophets who were educated in those schools of which the institution is attributed to Samuel⁷, were principally employed in this spiritual service; and thus by being exercised in habits of piety, and duly attuned and sanctified for the reception of the Divine Spirit, they seem to have been often favoured and enlightened by its suggestions. The more remarkable prophecies, however, which referred to distant periods, which received their accomplishment in after ages, and still continue to excite our admiration, were delivered by persons, often, indeed, selected from these schools, but evidently endued with a large portion of the Spirit, and more eminently distinguished by marks of Divine favour.

Such were the principal, if not the only modes by which God vouchsafed to reveal himself to the prophets; always, we have seen, in a manner consistent with the greatness of his attributes, and with the dignity of the prophetic character; and all those communications which in Scripture are said to have been derived from God without any particular description⁸ of the manner in which they were conveyed, must be understood to have been received through one of those channels which have been here pointed out.

The Prophets, as might be expected from the dis-

⁷ Preface to the Second Book of Samuel,

⁸ As when we are told, "thus saith the Lord;" or, "the word of the Lord came;" which is sometimes stated to have occurred to persons not endowed with the prophetic character. These expressions import only, that the instruction was conveyed by the means then appointed, whether by angel, urim, prophet, or dream. Vid. Gen. xxii. 1. with Calmet. Josh. i. 1. 1 Kings iii. 11. Jer. i. 2—4. Hosea i. 1, &c. Maimon. More Nevoch. Par. ii. c. xli. p. 307. Edit. Buxtorf. Basil. 1629.

tinguished marks of Divine approbation which they received, seem to have been singularly qualified for the sacred ministry. It is not meant to include in this consideration persons of condemned or ambiguous character, who are represented in Scripture as compelled occasionally to give utterance to the suggestions of the sacred Spirit; but confining ourselves to a contemplation of those who are declared to have been the appointed servants of God, and whose inspired writings still continue to instruct mankind, it may be affirmed, that in the long and illustrious succession from Moses to Malachi, not one appears who was not entitled to considerable reverence by the display of great and extraordinary virtues⁹. Employed in the exalted office of teaching and reforming mankind, they appear to have been animated with a becoming and correspondent zeal. No unworthy passions, or disingenuous motives, were permitted to interfere with their great designs. Not indeed, that they were always directed by the guidance of the Spirit to undeviating propriety of life, since it is manifest that they sometimes acted as unassisted men subject to error; but notwithstanding the failings which their own confessions have transmitted to us, it appears, that in general, their passions were controlled in subjection to those perfect laws which

⁹ 2 Pet. i. 21. The Hebrew doctors collect this general rule from a consideration of the characters of the Prophets, that the Spirit of prophecy never rested upon any but a holy and wise man; one whose passions were allayed. Vid. R. Albo. Maam. iii. c. 36. Porta Mosis in Pocock's works. Abarb. Præf. in xii. Prophet. Maimon. More Nevoch. Par. ii. c. xxxvi. p. 292. Vid. also Origen cont. Cels. lib. vii. p. 336. edit. Cantab. Gem. Pesac. c. vi. The rule, however, is not universally true. Vid. Numb. xxiv. 1 Sam. x. 9. 11.

they taught, and that the strength of their convictions rendered them insensible to secular attractions. They acted in the spirit of the persuasions which they expressed¹. When not immediately employed in the discharge of their sacred office, they lived sequestered from the world in religious communities²; or wandered “in deserts, in mountains, and in caves of the earth;” distinguished by their apparel, and by the general simplicity of their style of life³.

The Prophets were the established oracles of their country, and consulted upon all occasions when it was necessary to collect the Divine will on any civil or religious question; and we hear of no schisms or divisions while they flourished. They even condescended to inform the people of common concerns in trivial cases, in order to preclude them from all pretence or excuse for resorting to idolatrous practices, and heathen divinations; and they were always furnished with some prescribed mode of consulting God, or obtained revelations by prayer⁴; for we are not to suppose that they were invariably empowered to prophesy by any permanent or perpetual inspiration⁵. These illustrious personages were likewise as well the types, as the harbingers of that greater Prophet whom they foretold;

¹ Jerem. xxxii. 14.

² There were schools of the Prophets at Jerusalem, Bethel, Jericho, Rama, and Gilgal. Vid. 2 Kings xxii. 14. 2 Kings ii. 5. 1 Sam. xix. 20. 2 Kings iv. 38.

³ 1 Sam. xix. 24. 2 Kings i. 8. iv. 10. 38. v. 15, 16. Isaiah xx. 2. Zech. xiii. 4. Matt. iii. 4. Heb. xi. 38. Rev. xi. 3.

⁴ Jerem. xxxiii. 3.

⁵ 2 Kings iv. 27. Maimon. More Nevoch, Pars ii. cap. xxxvi. et xlv. Moses, and as some say, David, were supposed to be exceptions to this remark, and to have been perpetually inspired.

and in the general outline of their character, as well as in particular events of their lives, they prefigured to the Jews the future Teacher of mankind. Like him, also, they laboured by every exertion, to instruct and reclaim their countrymen; reproving and threatening the sinful, however exalted in rank, or encircled by power, with such fearless confidence and sincerity, as often excited respect. The most intemperate princes were sometimes compelled unwillingly to hear and to obey their directions⁶, though often so incensed by their rebuke, as to resent it by the severest persecutions. Then it was that the Prophets evinced the integrity of their characters, by zealously encountering oppression, hatred, and death, in the cause of religion. Then it was that they firmly supported "trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about, destitute, afflicted, tormented⁷;" evil intreated for those virtues of which the memorial should flourish to posterity, and martyred for righteousness, which whenever resentment should subside, it would be deemed honourable to reverence⁸.

The manner in which the Prophets published their predictions, was either by uttering them aloud in some public place, or by affixing them on the gates of the temple⁹, where they might be generally seen and read. Upon important occasions, when it was necessary to

⁶ 1 Sam. xv. 13—30. 2 Sam. xii. 1—15. 1 Kings xii. 21—24. xiii. 2—6. xx. 42, 43. xxi. 27. 2 Chron. xxviii. 9—14.

⁷ Heb. xi. 36, et seq. James v. 10.

⁸ Matt. xxiii, 27—29.

⁹ Jer. vii. 2. xix. 2. Howel, lib. vi. p. 167.

rouse the fears of a disobedient people, and to recal them to repentance, the Prophets, as objects of universal attention, appear to have walked about publicly in sackcloth, and with every external mark of humiliation and sorrow. They then adopted extraordinary modes of expressing their convictions of impending wrath, and endeavoured to awaken the apprehensions of their countrymen by the most striking illustration of threatened punishment. Thus Jeremiah made bonds and yokes, and put them upon his neck ¹, strongly to intimate the subjection that God would bring on the nations whom Nebuchadnezzar should subdue. Isaiah likewise walked naked, that is, without the rough garment of the Prophet ², and barefoot ³, as a sign of the distress that awaited the Egyptians. So Jeremiah

¹ Jerem. xxvii. It is clear from the account in the next chapter, that Jeremiah put the yoke on his own neck. Vid. chap. xxviii. 10. See also 1 Kings xxii. 11. Acts xxi. 11. But, as to send bonds and yokes may imply only figuratively to predict captivity, it is not necessary to suppose that Jeremiah literally sent yokes and bonds to all the kings enumerated in the account, but only that he foretold their fate; perhaps illustrating his prophecy by some significant tokens. Vid. Mede's Com. on Apocal. part i. p. 470. Waterland's tracts on Jerem. xxvii. 23.

² Isa. xx. Harmer's Observat. vol. iv. p. 402. John xxi. 7. Origen cont. Cels. lib. vii. p. 699. edit. Par. 1733.

³ It is said in the text, three years, which means at intervals during that time. Some think that we should understand three days; a year being sometimes placed in prophetic language for a day. Others maintain, that the Hebrew text, agreeably to the Masoretic punctuation, applies the three years, not to Isaiah's walking, but to the calamity thereby foreshown, and the Seventy, St. Jerom, and our old English versions, adopt this construction. Others, lastly, consider the account as the narrative of a transaction in vision, or as a parable related by Isaiah.

broke the potter's vessel⁴; and Ezekiel publicly removed his household goods⁵ from the city; more forcibly to represent by these actions some correspondent calamities ready to fall on nations obnoxious to God's wrath; this mode of expressing important circumstances by action, being customary and familiar among all eastern nations.

The conduct of the Prophets upon these occasions must be considered with reference to the importance of their ministry; and with great allowance for difference of manners in their time; and then will this mode of prophesying by actions appear to have been not only very striking and impressive, but strictly agreeable to the design and decorum of the prophetic character. It has, however, been strenuously maintained, that many actions attributed to the Prophets, and even some of those which have been here represented as real, were not actually performed; and that many of these accounts should be considered as parables related by the Prophets; or as descriptive of visions, intended strongly to impress the imagination of the Prophets, and so inform them symbolically of those things in which they were to instruct the people⁶. So very confident have been the sentiments on both sides, of those who have

⁴ Jerem. xix. 10.

⁵ Ezek. xii. 7. compared with 2 Kings xxv. 4, 5. where the accomplishment of this typical prophecy is related. Vid. also Ezek. xxxvii. 16—20.

⁶ Where it is said, that "the hand of the Lord was upon the prophet," or "the word of the Lord came unto him," it is generally thought that a vision is described; and where the instruction of the prophet only was designed, the transaction was probably confined to the scene of the prophet's imagination. Vid. Gen. xv. 4, 5. Jerem. i. 11, 13. xviii. 1—4. xxiv. 1—4. Ezek. iii. 22—27. viii. xxxvii.

supported these opposite opinions, that it would be presumptuous to decide on the subject. The Prophets themselves sometimes inform us only of certain commands which they received, without explaining whether they understood them as figurative instructions to be described to the people, or whether they literally obeyed them. This appears in the account given by Ezekiel, in which he states to us, that he was directed to make a mimic portraiture of a siege, and to continue a great length of time lying on his side; as also in that in which he declares himself to have been commanded to shave and to consume his hair⁷. The nature of these injunctions seems to import only some figurative instructions given and obeyed in vision⁸. At other times, the Prophets describe not merely the precept, but the transaction, with particulars so minutely and circumstantially detailed, that we might be led to ad-

⁷ Ezekiel iv. and v.

⁸ It is not positively asserted that these injunctions were not literally executed, but that probably they never were, since Ezekiel does not profess actually to have performed them; and the nature of the thing seems to prove, that they were acted only in the imagination of the prophet. But if the historical sense be received, it certainly may be vindicated from all reasonable objections. Ezekiel might have been miraculously enabled to bear the fatigue of lying so long on his side; and the cavil of Maimonides against the reality of the second transaction is frivolous, for though it was unlawful for the priest to shave, (vid. Levit. xxi. 5. Ezek. xlv. 20.) the law might certainly be dispensed with, by God's command; and as unusual, it must have been more remarkable as a sign. The portraiture of the siege, as represented by the prophet, whether it were real or visionary, was descriptive of the circumstances that occurred at and after the taking of Jerusalem. Compare Ezek. iv. 1—3. with Josephus. See also Keppel's Pers. Narrat. from India, vol. i. ch. 9. p. 208, 209.

mit a positive historical sense, did not the difficulties and apparently inadequate advantage of an actual performance, tend to demonstrate that the scene must have been fictitious. Thus, however circumstantial be the relation of Jeremiah, relative to his concealment of the girdle, it is difficult to conceive that God should command the Prophet to take two such long journeys⁹ merely for the purpose of this typical illustration¹. Nor was it possible, without miracles multiplied for a purpose which might as well have been effected by a prophetic vision, that Jeremiah should make the various nations which he enumerates, drink of the cup of fury, which he professed to have received at God's hand². These transactions, if performed in vision, might be described by the Prophets as signs and intimations to those whom they addressed. The people would not, indeed, be so strongly affected thereby, as if they had really witnessed the occurrence of these

⁹ Jerem. xiii. "Absit," says Maimonides, in a spirit of hasty and indignant piety, "ut Deus Prophetas suos stultis vel ebris similes reddat." But this judicious writer appears to judge too precipitately, and contrary to the opinion of his countrymen, where he determines that, whenever these actions are represented by way of parable or similitude, they must be understood as visionary transactions. Vid. More Nevoch, Par. ii. c. xlvi. p. 322. Hieron. Præfat. in Osee, p. 1234. tom. iii. Glassii Philol. Sac. lib. ii. par. i. Tract 2. § iv. Art. iii. Stillingfleet's Letter to a Deist, p. 131.

¹ From Jerusalem to the Euphrates, was about 200 leagues. Bochart conceives, that as the initial letter *א* is often dropped, the Hebrew word *phrath*, may stand for *Ephrath*, or *Ephratah*, which was Bethlehem, not far from Jerusalem. Bochart. Oper. Post. p. 956.

² Jerem. xxv. 15—29. This might be a direction to the prophet, instructing him figuratively to predict God's anger, and Jeremiah may be supposed to have obeyed it in a figurative sense.

actions; and it must be added, that where the circumstances do not absolutely authorize us to suppose that the Prophet speaks of transactions in vision, and where the action might reasonably and advantageously to the Prophet's designs, be literally performed, it is more consistent with the rules that should be observed in the interpretation of Scripture, to admit a literal and positive construction ³.

It is now necessary to consider more immediately the writings of the Prophets. It is probable, from the variety of style observable therein, that the Holy Spirit suggested in general, only the matter, and not the words to the Prophets ⁴; and this opinion is confirmed, when we reflect that our Saviour and his apostles cited in general more according to the sense, than to the letter of Scripture, and that, though Christ himself appears to have referred to the Hebrew, the Evangelical writers seem, in the majority of instances, to have used the Septuagint version, at least when it did not differ from the Hebrew original ⁵. Moses is by some supposed to have been an exception in this particular, and to have received the very words and phrases in which the communications that he obtained are de-

³ Witsius *Miscel. Sac. lib. i. cap. xii. p. 94.* Edit. Amstel. 1695. Carpzov. *Introd. in Theol. Jud. c. viii.* Pocock on Hosea, ch. i. 2. Smith's *Disc. on Prophecy, ch. vi.* Jenkins's *Reasonableness of Christianity, vol. ii. p. 50.* Lakemacher *Observ. Philol. vol. ii. p. 70.* Waterland's *Tracts. Warburt. Div. Legat. lib. iv. § 4.*

⁴ Maimon. *More Nevoch. Par. ii. cap. xxix.* Origen *Epist. ad African. Abarbenel in Jer. xlix.*

⁵ Of 170 texts cited from the Old Testament in the New, 106 are stated to agree with the Septuagint, and 64 to differ from that version. See Spearman's *Letters concerning the Septuagint, Edinburgh, 1759. p. 344.*

scribed⁶. But this remark should perhaps be confined to the decalogue, of which the laws were graven on tablets by God himself: and even in the recapitulation of these in Moab, Moses varies a little in expressions, to intimate, probably, that the sense, and not the letter, is the important object of attention. Upon all occasions, however, when the Prophets were addressed by an audible voice, they doubtless recollected, through Divine assistance, every word in which the revealed instructions were conveyed. Where they collected their information from the representation of hieroglyphical circumstances in dreams and visions, they were probably left to express in their own language the things which they had beholden. Hence is the style of every prophet more or less perspicuous, according to the nature and clearness of the revelation imparted to him⁷, and, likewise, characterized with peculiar discriminations resulting from education, and particular intercourse and habits of life, which certify the authenticity of his works.

It cannot, however, be denied, that sometimes the Prophets were instructed in the very expressions which they should use⁸; and when composing under the influence of that inspiration which dictated whatever was conducive to the promotion of God's designs, they delivered both sentiments and expressions, of which they themselves understood not always the full importance

⁶ Bishop Hurd on Prophecy. Lowth on Isaiah. Whitby's Preface to Com. Gem. Sanhed.

⁷ Zechariah's, Ezekiel's, and Daniel's Prophecies, are sometimes obscure from the multitude of images represented to their imaginations in vision. Vid. R. Albo, cap. x.

⁸ 1 Cor. ii. 13. Isaiah vii. 14.

and extent⁹. Sensible of the predominating power¹, they communicated their Divine intelligence as the Spirit gave utterance; conveying prophecies of which neither they nor their hearers, probably, perceived the full scope, nor foresaw distinctly the spiritual accomplishment; writing for the advantage of those who were to come after, and to afford evidence in support of a future dispensation.

Lord Bacon² detects much philosophical knowledge in various parts of Scripture, which seems to go beyond the discoveries of the period in which it is supposed they were written³: thus, for instance, Moses shows an acquaintance with the powers of chemistry, and his precepts with respect to the separation of unclean persons are regulated by physical considerations which imply an intimate knowledge of the nature of contagion⁴. Job appears to allude to the figure and circumstances of the world suspended by the influence of appointed laws in empty space⁵; to the station and constituted periods of the fixed stars⁶, and to the depression of the southern pole⁷. Isaiah, also, and other prophets, express themselves in a manner consistent with just notions of the form of the earth⁸. The expressions which are used are such as appertain only to the real state of things.

⁹ Psalm xxii. Isaiah liii. Dan. viii. 13, 14. 26, 27. xii. 8. 1 Cor. xiii. 9—12. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12.

¹ Jerem. xx. 9. Ezek. iii. 14.

² See Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, book i. p. 436.

³ Exod. xxxii. 20. See *Nieuwentyt Relig. Philos.* vol. i. p. 570.

⁴ Vide Levit. xiii. 13, &c.

⁵ Job xxvi. 7.

⁶ Job xxxviii. 31.

⁷ Job ix. 9.

⁸ Isaiah xl. 22. Jeremiah vi. 22. xxxi. 37. and *Relig. Philos.* book iv. p. 814.

The great object of prophecy was, as has been before observed, a description of the Messiah, and of his kingdom⁹. The particulars with respect to these, were gradually unfolded by successive Prophets, in predictions more and more distinct. They were at first holden forth in general promises; they were afterwards specified by figures, and shadowed out under types and illusive institutions; as well as clearly foretold in the full lustre of descriptive prophecy. A complete explication of the Scripture types would require more compass than can be here allowed. It may, however, be observed, by way of general illustration, that the remarkable personages under the old dispensation were sometimes, in the detail of their characters, and in the events of their lives¹, the representatives of the future dispensers of evangelical blessings, as Moses and David were unquestionably types of Christ². Persons, likewise, were sometimes descriptive of things, as Sarah and Hagar were allegorical figures of the two covenants³. And, on the other hand, things were used to symbolize persons, as the brazen serpent, and the Paschal Lamb⁴, were signs of our healing and spotless Redeemer. And so, lastly, ceremonial appointments

⁹ Matt. xxvi. 56. Luke i. 70. xviii. 31. xxiv. 44. John i. 45. Acts iii. 18. 24. x. 43. xiii. 27. xv. 15. xxviii. 23. 1 Pet. i. 10—12. Maimon. in. Sanh. R. Solomon Jarchi, in Zechar. ix. Lowman on Prophecy.

¹ Matt. xii. 40.

² Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Vid. also Matt. xi. 14. Heb. vi. 20. vii. 1—3.

³ Gal. iv. 22—31. and Rom. ix. 8—13. See also, Psalm xxxiv. 20.

⁴ John iii. 14. Comp. also Exod. xii. 46. with John xix. 36.

and legal regulations were pre-ordained as significant of Gospel institutions ⁵.

Hence it was that many of the representations of the Prophets had a twofold character: bearing often an immediate reference to present circumstances, and yet being in their nature allusive of future occurrences. What they reported of the type was often in a more signal manner applicable to the thing typified ⁶; what they spoke literally of present, was figuratively descriptive of future particulars ⁷; and what was applied in a figurative sense to existing persons, was often actually characteristic of their distant archetypes ⁸. Many passages, then, in the Old Testament, which in their first aspect appear to be historical, are in fact prophetic, and they are so cited in the New Testament, not by way of ordinary accommodation, or casual coincidence, but as intentionally predictive, as having a double sense, a literal and mystical interpretation ⁹.

This mode of wrapping up religious truths in allegory, was practised by all nations ¹. It was familiar to the Jews, and agreeable to their conceptions of the nature of the Scriptures ². It gives, likewise, great

⁵ 1 Cor. x. 1—11. Heb. viii. 5. ix. x. 1 Pet. iii. 20. 22. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. viii. c. x. Lowth's Preface to Comm. on Prophets. Lowth's Preface to Isaiah. Vid. also the Accounts of Exodus and Leviticus in this work.

⁶ Psalm xxi. 4—6. xl. 1. 7—10. Canticles. Lament. iii. 1—30. Psa. xli. 9. comp. with John xiii. 18. Dan. ix. 26, 27.

⁷ Psalms and Prophets, passim.

⁸ Psalm xxii. 16—18, &c.

⁹ Compare Hosea xi. 1. with Matt. ii. 15.

¹ Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. v. p. 681. tom. ii.

² Psa. cxix. 18. Eccclus. xlviii. 10. and Mede's Disc. c. xxv.

interest and importance to the sacred book; in the perusal of which the diligent are daily recompensed by the discovery of more admirable contrivance, and unexpected beauties; the intimate analogy which was concerted between the Jewish and the Christian church, rendering the figurative display strikingly proper and curious.

Besides those historical passages, of which the covert allusions were explained by the interpretation of the Gospel writers, who were enlightened by the Spirit to unfold the mysteries of Scripture, the Prophets often uttered positive predictions, which, in consequence of the correspondence established between the two dispensations, were descriptive of a double event; however they might be themselves ignorant of the full extent of those prophecies which they delivered. For instance, their promises of present success and deliverances, were often significant of distant benefits, and secular consolations conveyed assurances of evangelical blessings³. Thus their prophecies received completion in a first and secondary view. As being, in part, signs to excite confidence, they had an immediate accomplishment, but were afterwards fulfilled in a more illustrious sense⁴; the Prophets being inspired by the

Acts viii. 34. Maimon. *More Nevoch*. par. ii. c. xliii. p. 312. R. David Kimchi on Hosea i. 4. in *Bemidbar Rab. Observat.* Jos. de Voisin. in *Procem. Pugion. Fidei*, p. 154. edit. Lips. 1687. M. B. Israel spes Israelis, § 25. Philo de Vit. Contem. vol. ii. p. 475. edit. Mangey. Joseph. *Antiq. lib. iii. cap. ix.* Origen cont. Cels. lib. ii. p. 412. edit. Par. 1733. Chandler's Def. § v. ch. iii.

³ 2 Sam. vii. 13, 14. comp. with Heb. i. 5. *Pensées de Pascal*, § 10. 14.

⁴ 1 Kings xiii. 2, 3. Isaiah vii. 14. and Matt. i. 2, 3. Comp. Dan. ix. 27. and xii. 7. with 1 Macc. i. 54. and Matt. xxiv. 15.

suggestions of the Spirit, to use expressions magnificent enough to include the substance in the description of the figure. That many of the prophecies in the Old Testament were direct, and singly and exclusively applicable to, and accomplished in our Saviour, is certain⁵; and that some passages from the Old Testament are cited only by way of accommodation to circumstances described in the New, is, perhaps, equally true⁶. But that this typical kind of prophecy was likewise employed is evident, as well from the interpretation of the passages above referred to, as from the application of many other parts of Scripture by the sacred writers, and, indeed, from their express declarations⁷.

It requires much attention to comprehend the full import and extent of this typical dispensation, and the

Vitringa Obser. Sac. lib. ii. c. 11. and c. 12. § 5. edit. Amst. 1727. Glassii Philo Sac. lib. ii. par. i. Tract 2. Witsii Miscel. Sac. tom. i. lib. iii. cap. iii. and lib. ii. Diss. 1, 2. Æcon. Fœd. lib. iv. c. vi.—x. Sixt. Senen. in Bib. Sanc. Cunæus Rep. Heb. Jenkins's Reasonableness. Pensées de Pascal. ch. xv. n. 13. Jackson's Works, vol. ii. book vii. § 2.

⁵ Gen. xlix. 10. Psalm xxii. 18. xlv. Isaiah vii. 14. lii. liii. Dan. vii. 13, 14. Micah v. 2. Zechar. ix. 9. Mal. iii. 1. Origen cont. Cels. lib. i. p. 39.

⁶ Comp. Exod. xvi. 18. with 2 Cor. viii. 15. Many passages, however, supposed accidentally to correspond, seem to have been designedly prophetic. Comp. Isaiah xxix. 13. with Matt. xv. 7, 8. Isaiah vi. 9. with Matt. xiii. 14. Psal. lxxviii. 2. with Matt. xiii. 35. Jerem. xxxi. 15. with Matt. ii. 17.

⁷ Hos. xii. 10. 1 Cor. x. 11. Heb. ix. x. Gal. iii. 24. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. v. p. 659. edit. Potter. Hilar. in Psal. lxxiii. n. 2, 3. August. de Doct. Christ. lib. iii. c. iv. § 9. p. 47. tom. iii. Paris, 1689. Waterland's Preface to Script. Vindic. and Lancaster's Abridg. of Daubuz.

chief obscurities which prevail in the sacred writings are to be attributed to the double character of prophecy⁸. To unravel this, is, however, an interesting and instructive study; though an admiration of the spiritual meaning should never lead us to disregard or undervalue the first and evident signification; for many great men have been so dazzled by their discoveries in this mode of explication, as to be hurried into wild and extravagant excess; as is evident from the writings of Origen⁹, and St. Jerom¹; as likewise from the commentaries of St. Augustin, who acknowledges² that he had too far indulged in the fancies of an exuberant imagination, declaring that the other parts of Scripture are the best commentaries. The apostles and the evangelists are, indeed, the best expositors; but where these infallible guides have led the way, we need not hesitate to follow their steps by the light of clear reason, and just analogy.

It is this double character of prophecy which occasions those unexpected transitions and sudden interchange of circumstance so observable in the prophetic

⁸ Pfeiffer Hermeneut. Sac. p. 633. Chand. Def. sect. 1. Lowth's Vindic. of Old and New Test.

⁹ Origen was a scholar of Clemens Alexandrinus, who derived his taste for allegory from the works of Philo, the Jew. Vid. Phot. Cod. 105. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. vi. cap. xix. Hieron. Epist. ad Mag. Smallbrook's Answer to Woolston, vol. i. p. 93.

¹ He professes, in the fervour of youthful fancy, to have spiritualized the Book of Obadiah, before he understood it, and prefers his historical explications as a work *Maturæ Senectutis*. Vid Procem. in Abdiam.

² August. Retract. lib. i. c. xviii. tom. l. p. 28. He contended for a four-fold sense of Scripture. Vid. Glassii Philol. lib. ii. par. ij. tract 2. et seq.

books. Thus different predictions are sometimes blended and mixed together³; temporal and spiritual deliverances are foretold in one prophecy; and great and smaller events are combined in one point of view. Hence, likewise, one chain of connected design ran through the whole scheme of prophecy, and a continuation of events successively fulfilling, and successively branching out into new predictions, continued to confirm the faith, and to keep alive the expectations of the Jews. It was the character of the prophetic spirit to be rapid in its descriptions, and regardless of the order of history; to pass with quick and unexpected celerity from subject to subject, and from period to period.

“We must allow,” says Lord Bacon⁴, “for that latitude that is agreeable and familiar to prophecy, which is of the nature of its author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day.” The whole of the great scheme must have been at once present to the Divine mind, but God described its parts in detail to mankind; in such measures, and in such proportions, that the connection of every link was obvious, and its relations apparent in every point of view, till the harmony and entire consistency of the plan were displayed to those who witnessed its perfection in the advent of Christ. It foretold with remarkable exactness many of the great revolutions which promoted the designs of Pro-

³ As those which refer to the first and second restoration of the Jews, and to the first and second coming of Christ; the Prophets taking occasion from the description of near, to launch out into that of distant circumstances, as did our Saviour in his famous Prophecy. Vid. Matt. xxiv. Vid. Preface to Isaiah.

⁴ Bacon de Augm. Scient. lib. ii.

vidence, and conspired to the establishment of the Gospel.

It may be further observed of prophecy, as it appears in the sacred writings, that it was “a light shining in a dark place⁵ ;” that it was not generally designed to be so clear as to excite an expectation of particular events, or a desire of counteracting foreseen calamities⁶ ; but that it was intended in the accomplishment of its predictions to demonstrate the wisdom and power of God⁷. It was sufficiently exact in its descriptions to authenticate the pretensions to a Divine authority, and to produce, when it came to pass, an acknowledgment of its unerring certainty. Had it been more clear, it must have controlled the freedom of human actions ; or have appeared to have produced its own accomplishment, furnishing sinners with a plea of necessity⁸. The completion of the predictions is not even in general pointed out by the sacred writers by any direct reference, but is to be collected from the historical events, and often from the casual and scattered notices which they afford, or which are obtained from profane writers. The Prophets intimate the insufficiency of the ritual institution

⁵ 2 Pet. i. 19.

⁶ Had the Jews certainly known Christ to have been the predicted Messiah, they would not have crucified the Lord of Life. Vid. Acts xiii. 27. iii. 17.

⁷ Sir Isaac Newton on Dan. p. 251. Hurd on Prophecy, Serm. ii. John xiii. 19. xvi. 4. Lowth's Vindication of the Divine Authority of the Old and New Test. p. 171. The prophecies relative to the Messiah must have appeared very obscure and irreconcilable with each other before the appearance of Christ, as they referred both to his human and Divine character—to his earthly sufferings and future exaltation.

⁸ Lowth's Vindicat. p. 77.

of the law⁹. Had the period of the Messiah's advent been at first distinctly and precisely revealed, the Jews would have disregarded such a distant hope. Sometimes, however, when occasion required, the predictions of the Prophets were positive, and exactly descriptive¹, and occasionally delivered with an accurate and definite designation of names and times². Hence, though the character and kingdom of Christ were at first holden out only in general and intermediate promises, yet so emphatic were the assurances as the time approached, and so peremptory the limitation of its period; so forcible and particular were the prophecies concerning the Messiah, when collected and concentrated into one point of view, that about the æra of our Saviour's birth, a very general persuasion of the instant appearance of some great and extraordinary personage prevailed, not only in Judæa, but also in other countries; as is evident from the accounts of various writers³, sacred and profane⁴.

⁹ Micah vi. 6—8. Hosea vi. 6. 1 Sam. xv. 22.

¹ Numb. xxiv. 17. Isa. ix. 6. Zechar. ix. 9. xi. 12, 13. Dan. ii. 38—45. Mal. i. 1. iii. 1.

² Gen. xv. 13. Numb. xiv. 33. Jerem. xxv. 11, 12. Dan. ix. 24, 25. Micah v. 2.

³ New Test. passim. Vid. also 1 Macc. iv. 46. xiv. 41. and Preface to the Historical Books, p. 134, note⁴.

⁴ Cicero de Divin. lib. ii. cap. 54. p. 85. tom. 3. Tacit. Histor. lib. v. § 13. Sueton. Vespas. c. iv. Virgil's Eclog. iv. Æneid. VI. l. 791. et seq. Vossius de Sibyl. Orac. c. iv. p. 232. edit. Lond. 1685. Cudworth's Intell. Syst. book i. c. iv. Nechumias, a Jewish Rabbi, is said to have affirmed, about 50 years before the birth of Christ, that the appearance of the Messiah could not be delayed above 50 years; collecting his opinion, probably, from the prophecies of Daniel. Dr. Woodward's Sermons in Boyle's Lect. vol. ii. p. 516.

It has been very erroneously imagined, that the Prophets and inspired writers of the Old Testament, took but little pains to instruct the Israelites in the doctrine of a future state; and that in their exhortations and threats, they confined themselves entirely to motives of temporal reward and punishment. It has been as strangely asserted also, that though the Jews thought with the rest of mankind, that the soul survived the body, yet that they simply concluded that it returned to him who gave it, without indulging in any speculations concerning its state of future existence⁵. But though, as it has been before observed⁶, Moses annexed only temporal sanctions to his laws, (which by no means excluded, but were indeed understood to be figurative of greater promises⁷;) yet the Prophets in their addresses to the hopes and fears of their countrymen, unquestionably held out the encouragement of eternal happiness, and the terrors of eternal misery. It is certain also, that the Jews looked anxiously forward to that state of immortality which they expected to inherit, not merely from the general conviction of a future existence, which as an obvious truth they, in common with all other nations entertained; but from the more positive and particular information that they

⁵ Le Clerc, Warburton, &c. Vid. Div. Legat. book v. § 6. p. 476.

⁶ Preface to Pentateuch, p. 60.

⁷ Heb. xi. 8—16. 25, 26. Deut. xxxii. 29. 1 Sam. ii. 6. Psalm lxx. 2. Isa. xxvi. 19. Hence it is, that Maimonides observes, “Quod ad resurrectionem autem mortuorum, est id fundamentum e fundamentis legis Mosis, quam si quis non credat, non est ipsi in Judæorum Religione sors aut locus;” (vid. Pocock’s *Porta Mosis*, p. 60.) and yet his countrymen considered his testimony as not sufficiently strong, as Maimonides confesses. Vid. also Levit. xviii. 5.

obtained from revealed accounts; for not to mention that the general denunciations of God's wrath must have been understood to involve declarations of permanent retribution, it is manifest from numberless passages of Scripture, that the Prophets directly appealed to those convictions which the people cherished as to a future state; and that they rested on motives of future consideration, as on the strongest arguments to excite obedience⁸. The Prophets did not, it is true, so fully insist upon these motives, or so perfectly reveal the assurance and character of a final judgment, as did our Saviour, who brought life and immortality distinctly to view⁹, and whose Gospel was entirely grounded on

⁸ Job xiii. 15. xix. 25—29. and Preface to Job. Psalm i. 5. ix. 8. xvi. 11. xvii. 15. xxiii. 4. xxx. 19, 20. xlix. 7, 8. 15. l. lviii. 11. lxxiii. 3—26. lxxxvii. 6. xevi. 13. cxv. 8. cxvi. 15. cxxxiii. 3. cxxxix. 24. Prov. iv. 18, 19. viii. 35, 36. ix. 18. x. 2. 28. xi. 7, 8. xii. 28. xiv. 32. xv. 24. xxi. 16. xxii. 18. xxiv. 12. comp. with Rom. ii. 6. and Rev. xxii. 12. Eccles. iii. 17. 21. xi. 9. xii. 7. 14. Isa. ii. 17. v. 16. xxv. 8. xxvi. 4. 9. 19. xxxiii. 14. li. 8. lvii. 1, 2. lviii. 8. lxiv. 4. comp. with 1 Cor. ii. 9. Jerem. xvii. 11. 13. Ezek. xviii. xxxii. 27. xxxvii. Dan. vii. 10. 18. xii. 2, 3. 13. Hosea xiii. 14. Joel ii. 30. comp. with Matt. xxiv. 29. Zephan. iii. 8. Zech. iii. 7. Mal. iii. 16. 18. iv. 1. Matt. xxii. 32. Acts xxiv. 14, 15.

⁹ Christ is said, in our translation, to have “brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel,” 2 Tim. i. 10. which by no means imports that the doctrine was before unknown, but agreeably to the sense of the original, *φωτίσαντος ζωὴν καὶ ἀθάνατον*, that he rendered life and immortality more clear, or diffused light on that doctrine, as the word *φωτίζειν* signifies in John i. 9. 1 Cor. iv. 5. Ephes. iii. 9. and elsewhere. Vide Robertson's *Clavis Pentateuchi*, Præf. p. 19. note *. Or perhaps the text means, that Christ having abolished death, opened to us a prospect of immortality, and disposed the doctrine to the Gentile world, “which sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death.” Christ likewise brought life and im-

those higher sanctions and better promises⁸; but they, nevertheless, did apply to these cogent motives, and more forcibly so, as that covenant approached to which Immortality was annexed, as a positive and declared condition⁹.

The Jews could not have believed the translation of Enoch¹, and Elijah², the imperfect recompence of the Patriarchs³, (who spoke of this life as a pilgrimage⁴), and of their great lawgiver, (who had no known sepulchre,) or the accomplishment of the promises⁵, to their own advantage, without a reliance on the enjoyment of some celestial state in which they should obtain the

mortality to light by annexing them as covenanted rewards to the Gospel. Pocock conceives that the doctrine of the resurrection was less explicitly laid down in the Law than in the Gospel, because the former was delivered to the posterity of Abraham, who entertained no doubts on the subject; whereas the Gospel was communicated to nations to whom the doctrine was not previously revealed; whence the remark of the Athenian philosophers concerning the preaching of St. Paul. Acts xvii. 18. Vide Notæ Miscel. in Porta Mosis, c. 6.

⁸ Heb. viii. 6.

⁹ Bull's Harmon. Apost. c. x. § 8. p. 72. edit. Lond. 1703.

¹ Gen. v. 24. Heb. xi. 5.

² 2 Kings ii. 11. See also, 2 Kings iv. 35, 36, 37.

³ The curses denounced against Adam could not be removed from the Patriarchs, as was promised by God's covenant, unless by a restoration to the prospect of eternal life: and the Jews must have known that their forefathers were dead without having received the accomplishment of the promises. Vid. Heb. xi. 39, 40.

⁴ Gen. xlvii. 8, 9.

⁵ The Jews must have perceived that temporal rewards were not allotted to individuals in proportion to their deserts: they must have seen the righteous oppressed, and the wicked triumphant; and, therefore, in the conviction of God's truth, they must have looked to the completion of his promises and threats in a future life.

consummation of their reward. Those among them whose opinions were grounded on revelation, unquestionably built their faith on the expectation of a future life and judgment; which is evident from many parts of the Old Testament⁶, as well as from express declarations of the evangelical writers in the New⁷; from whatever we can collect concerning their opinions before⁸ and after the publication of the Gospel; particularly from that firm confidence in those dispensa-

⁶ Gen. i. 27. ii. 7. xxxvii. 35. Numb. xxiii. 10. Deut. xiv. 1, 2. xxxii. 39. 1 Sam. ii. 6. xxv. 29. xxviii. 8. 14, 15. 2 Sam. xii. 23. 2 Kings xxii. 20. Job xix. 25. Psalm xxiii. 4. Daniel xii. 2. Hosea vi. 2. The passages, which seem to favour a contrary persuasion, and to import a distrust in a future state, are only opinions brought forward for refutation, or strong representations of the effects of death, as to the present world. They imply that, by the ordinary laws of nature, or by man's proper force, the dead should not be restored.

⁷ Matt. xxii. 23. 29—32. Luke xvi. 31. xx. 37, 38. John v. 39. viii. 26. xi. 24. Acts xxiii. 8. xxiv. 4—16. Heb. xi. 10. 16—19. 35. 39, 40. Luke xiii. 14. and Matt. xiii. 40—43. and 51. The Sadducees were distinguished as a sect who denied the resurrection. Acts xxiii. 8.

⁸ Wisd. iii. 1. 10. 18, 19. iv. 7. v. 1. 5. 15. viii. 13. Ecclus. xlix. 10. 2 Macc. vii. 9. 11. 14. 23. 29. 36. xiv. 46. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. ii. § 30. The Hebrew notions concerning the Sheol (the Hades of the Septuagint), which was the supposed place of departed souls, often mentioned in the Old Testament; concerning the Rephaim, (the giants, or ghosts of dead men, spoken of in Job xxvi. 5. and elsewhere) and concerning "the gathering of the righteous;" the request of Saul to the woman of Endor; and, lastly, the Paradise and the Gehenna, mentioned in the New Testament, all tend to prove that the Jews, before the coming of Christ, believed the separate existence of the soul, and a future state of reward and punishment.

tions which they now derive from the promises of Moses, and of the Prophets⁹, and which many expect to take place in the time of the Messiah¹.

The language of the Prophets is remarkable for its magnificence. Each writer is distinguished for peculiar beauties; but their style in general may be characterized as strong, animated, and impressive. Its ornaments are derived not from accumulation of epithet, or laboured harmony, but from the real grandeur of its images, and the majestic force of its expressions. It is varied with striking propriety, and enlivened with quick but easy transitions. Its sudden bursts of eloquence, its earnest warmth, its affecting exhortations and appeals, afford very interesting proofs of that vivid impression, and of that inspired conviction, under which the Prophets wrote; and which enabled them, among a people not distinguished for genius, to surpass in every variety of composition, the most admired productions of Pagan antiquity. If the imagery employed by the sacred writers appears sometimes to partake of a coarse and indelicate cast, it must be recollected, that the eastern manners and languages required the most forcible representations; and that the masculine and indignant spirit of the Prophets led them to adopt the most energetic and descriptive expressions.

No style is perhaps so highly figurative as that of the Prophets. Every object of nature and of art which can afford allusions, is explored with industry: every scene of creation, and every page of science, seems to

⁹ Buxtorf. *Synag. Jud.* c. iii. *Porta Mosis*, p. 52. et seq. and Pocock's notes, c. vi.

¹ Pocock. *Notæ Miscel.* in *Porta Mosis*, c. vi. and Mede's *Epist.* 43. to Dr. Twisse, lib. iv. p. 801-2. edit. Lond. 1677.

have unfolded its rich varieties to the sacred writers, who, in the spirit of eastern poetry, delight in metaphorical embellishment. Thus, by way of illustration, it is obvious to remark, that earthly dignities and powers are symbolized by the celestial bodies; the effects of moral evil are shown under the storms and convulsions of nature; the pollutions of sin are represented by external impurities; and the beneficial influence of righteousness is depicted by the serenity and confidence of peaceful life².

This allegorical language being founded on notions universally prevalent, and adhered to with invariable relation and regular analogy, has produced great ornament and elegance in the sacred writings. Sometimes, however, the inspired penmen drew their allusions from local and temporary sources of metaphor: from the peculiar scenery of their country; from the idolatries of heathen nations; from their own history and circumstances; from the service of their temple, and the ceremonies of their religion: from manners which have faded, and customs which have fallen to disuse. Hence many appropriate beauties have vanished. Many descriptions, and many representations, that must have had a solemn importance among the Jews, are now considered, from a change of circumstances, in a degraded point of view. Hence, likewise, here and there a shade of obscurity prevails³. In general, however,

² Newton on Daniel. Isaiah xxxii. 2. xxxiv. and xxxv. 1, 2. Jones's Lectures on the figurative Language of Scripture. Vitringa in Jesaia xxxiii. and xxxiv. chapters, p. 267. edit. Leovard, 1724. Lancaster's Abridgment of Daubuz. Mede. Bishop Hurd's Ninth Sermon on Prophecy.

³ Bundy's Introduction to the Sacred Books.

the language of Scripture, though highly sublime and beautiful, is easy and intelligible to all capacities. The Divine truth which it contains, is presented to us in the most clear and familiar manner ; it assumes, as it were, the dress of mankind, and instructs us with the condescension and familiarity of human converse. Not designed merely for the learned and the wise, it adopts a plain and perspicuous language, which has all the graces of simplicity, and all the beauties of unaffected eloquence. In treating of heavenly things, it reveals mysteries to which the human imagination could never have soared ; and discloses the attributes and conduct of God in representations analogous to our conceptions, without degrading them by any unworthy statement ⁴. It presents the Divine perfections incarnate, as it were, to our apprehensions, by the illustration of familiar images. Thus the human affections and corporeal properties which are ascribed to the Deity in Scripture, are level to the notions of the vulgar, and yet are readily understood by enlightened minds to be descriptive only of some correspondent attributes that consist with the excellency of the Divine nature : so that when revelation accommodates its language to our restricted intellects, it is with such faithful adherence to the real and essential properties of the Deity, and to the true character of heavenly things, that it is calculated to raise the conceptions, not to debase the theme.

⁴ “ *Lex loquitur lingua filiorum hominum,*” was a Jewish remark. But it has been observed, that no senses which savour of gross corporeity, are ascribed to God, as touching or tasting ; it being agreed, says Maimonides, “ *Deum non compingi cum corporibus per contactum corporalem.*” Vid. Maimon. Mor. Nevoc. par. i. c. xxvi. xxxiii. xlvii.

It remains to be observed, that the greatest part of the prophetic books, as well as those more especially styled poetical, was written in some kind of measure or verse⁵; though the Jews of very early times appear to have been insensible of the existence of any numerical arrangement in them⁶. As the Hebrew has been a dead language above eighteen centuries, and as it is generally thought to be destitute of vowels, we can have no power of ascertaining the pronunciation, or even the number of its syllables. The quantity and rhythm of its verse must, therefore, have entirely perished; and there can be no mode of discovering the rules by which they were governed⁷. That the Hebrew poetry in general, however, was controlled by some kind of measures is evident; not only from the peculiar selection of unusual expressions and phrases, but also from the artificial arrangement, and regular distribution of many sentences, which run in parallel divisions, and correspond, as it were, in equal periods;

⁵ The historical relations interspersed in these books are of course excluded from this remark. So, likewise, the Book of Daniel, which is chiefly narrative, has nothing poetical, nor has that of Jonah, except the prayer, which is an ode. The grave and elevated prophecies of Ezekiel, (whom Bishop Lowth has characterized as an orator rather than a poet) seem to reject metrical arrangement. The odes which are in the Books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Habakkuk, are of a distinct and peculiar species of poetry. Vid. Lowth's *Prælect.* 25, 26, 27, 28.

⁶ Most of the prophecies in the historical books are unquestionably written in some kind of measure, as those of Noah, Jacob, and Balaam, and the Divine hymn of Moses in the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy; all of which exhibit very beautiful specimens of metrical poetry.

⁷ The measure of the modern Jews is very different from that of the sacred writings, and was probably borrowed from the Arabians.

but whether this measure resulted from the observance of certain definite numerical feet, or was regulated by the ear, and the harmony of lines of similar cadence, is uncertain ⁸. The sententious modulation, however, which in consequence prevailed, was so strong as to be transfused, and to predominate in our translation. It is observable, also, that the measure is often varied; and even sometimes in the same poem, but with a propriety which appears from the effect to be always well adapted to the subject.

There is nothing inconsistent with the nature of inspiration, to suppose that its suggestions might be conveyed in numbers. The Prophets, in the ordinary modes of prophesying, were accustomed to compose their hymns to the sound of some musical instrument ⁹;

⁸ Lowth's *Prælect.* 3. and 19. et *metricæ Harianæ Confutatio*. The learned deny that correspondence and similitude between the Hebrew and the Grecian measures which St. Jerom, on the authority of Josephus and Origen, maintained to exist. *Vid.* *Prælect.* 18. Bedford's *Temple Music*, ch. vi. Calmet, &c. The Hebrew language hardly admitted a transposition of words sufficient for the Grecian measures; and it appears evident, that though the language abounds in similar terminations, yet that rhyme was not considered as necessary or ornamental in the Hebrew verse.

⁹ The Jews conceived that music calmed the passions, and prepared the mind for the reception of the prophetic influence. It is probable that the Prophets on these occasions did not usually perform, themselves, on the musical instruments, but rather accompanied the strains of the minstrel with their voice. *Vid.* 1 Sam. x. 5. 2 Kings iii. 15. 1 Chron. xxv. 1. Lowth's *Prælect.* *Poet.* 18. et seq. It has been the practice of all nations to adapt their religious worship to music, which the fabulous accounts of antiquity derived from heaven. *Alting. Hist. Acad. Heb.* p. 23. And Smidius de *Cantu Eccles. V. et N. Test. Mart. Gilb. de Cantu et Musica Sac. R. David Kimchi in 1 Sam. x. 5.*

and there could be but little difficulty in accommodating their effusions to a measure which imposed probably no great restrictions in a language so free and uncontrolled as the Hebrew. The Holy Spirit, likewise, while it quickened the invention of the Prophets, and fired their fancy, might enable them to observe the established style of composition.

The Prophets probably collected their own prophecies into their present form; though the author of the lives of the Prophets, under the name of Dorotheus, affirms, in a very groundless assertion, that none but David and Daniel did so; conceiving that the scribes of the temple received them as they were delivered, without order; but they were indisputably composed and published by those Prophets whose names they severally bear¹. As their genuine productions, they were received into the Jewish canon; and were read in the Jewish synagogues, (except during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, when the reading of the law was interdicted) to the days of our Saviour, from whose time they have been constantly read in the Christian churches². Some of the prophetic Psalms were blended in the Hebrew services and books, and they are with great propriety received and used in our service as illustrating the grand scheme of prophecy, and as replete with the most excellent instruction of

¹ Isaiah xxx. 8. Jerem. xxx. 2. Habak. iii. 2, &c.

² Acts xiii. 15. When the reading of the Laws was restored after this persecution, the prophetic books furnished detached passages for a second lesson, selected with reference to the section read from the Law, and read by a different person. The prophecies were read only in the morning service, and never on the Monday or Thursday, which days were appropriated to the Law exclusively.

every kind. The predictions which they contain, were principally accomplished in the appearance of Christ. Some, however, which referred to the dispersion and subsequent state of the Jews, as well as to the condition of other nations, still continue under own eyes to be fulfilled, and will gradually receive their final and consummate ratification in the restoration of the Jews, in the universal establishment of Christ's kingdom³, and in the second advent of our Lord to "judge the world in righteousness."

³ A final restoration of the Jews, and a spiritual reign of Christ to prevail after that restoration, are supposed to be foretold in Scripture, and were believed so to be from the earliest ages of the Christian church. Vid. Deut xxx. 1—5. Isaiah ii. 1—4. xi. iv. 2—4. xiv. 1. xxx. 18—26. xxxiii. 20—24. xxxv. 8—10. lx. xlix. 18—26. li. 3—23. liv. 11—14. lxii. lxv. 17—25. Hosea iii. 5. Joel ii. and iii. Amos ix. 11—15. Micah ii. 12. iv. 3—13. vii. 11—20. Zeph. iii. 8—20. Jer. iii. 16—18. xvi. 15. xxiii. 3—8. xxx. 3—20. xxxi. 4—14. 35—40. xxxiii. 7—11. Ezek. xx. 40—44. xxviii. 25, 26. xxxiv. 26—29. xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii. and xxxix. Dan. vii. 26, 27. Zechar. viii. 7, 8. Rev. xx. and xxi. &c. passim. Vid. also Matt. xx. 21. Acts i. 6. iii. 21. Barnab. Epist. c. xv. Justin Martyr Dialog. cum Tryphon. part ii. p. 315. edit. Thirlb. Iren. l. v. c. xxxii—xxxvi. Tertul. cont. Marcion. lib. iii. Eyre's Observat. on Prophecy. Wotton Pref. to Clem. Epist. p. 15. The doctrine of the Millennium may have been carried to an absurd and unwarranted excess; but some of these prophecies relating to this state, even if figuratively taken, are seemingly too magnificent to be restricted to the effects of the first advent of Christ, and promise at least an effectual and universal establishment of his spiritual influence.

OF THE

BOOK OF THE PROPHET

ISAIAH.

ISAIAH, who was professedly the author of this Book, and has been universally so considered, informs us, that he prophesied during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, who successively flourished between A.M. 3194 and 3305. He styles himself the son of Amoz, by whom we are not to understand the Prophet whose name is spelt Amos¹, and who was nearly coeval with Isaiah himself. It has been supposed that Isaiah was of the royal blood; and some have maintained that his father Amoz was the son of king Joash, and brother to Uzziah, or Azariah, king of Judah². He certainly was of that tribe, and of noble birth; and the Rabbins pretend that his father was a Prophet, which they collect from a general rule established among them: that the fathers of the Prophets

¹ The Prophet's name is spelt עמוס; that of the father of Isaiah, אמוז. Vid. Hieron. Prolog. in Isai. lib. i. p. 6. tom. iii. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. 27. Cyril Præf. Expos. in Amos.

² R. Isa. Abarb. Præf. in Isaiah. Seder Olam Zuta, et in Gemar. Codic. Megil. fol. 10. col. 11.

were themselves Prophets, when their names are mentioned in Scripture ³.

Isaiah was the first of the four great Prophets, and is represented to have entered on the prophetic office in the last year of Uzziah's reign, about 758 years before Christ ⁴. Some have supposed that he did not live beyond the fifteenth or sixteenth year of Hezekiah's reign ⁵; in which case he prophesied during the space of about forty-five years. But others are of opinion, that he survived Hezekiah, and that he was put to death in the reign of Manasseth. There is, indeed, a Jewish tradition, referred to in the book of the ascension of Isaiah ⁶, that he suffered martyrdom by command of that tyrant, in the first year of his reign, about 698 years before Christ, being cruelly sawn asunder with a wooden saw. On the supposition of the truth of this relation, we must allow that he prophesied during a space of more than sixty years ⁷.

Several of the fathers have, indeed, borne testimony to the tradition ⁸; and St. Paul is generally supposed to have referred to it in the epistle to the Hebrews ⁹.

³ Hieron. in Isai. xxxvii. 2. Epiphani. de Vitis Prophet. p. 138. and 145. edit. Paris, 1622.

⁴ Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. p. 391. edit. Potter. He was nearly contemporary with Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Micah.

⁵ Aben Ezra Com. in Isa. i. 1. He certainly lived beyond the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign. Vid. 2 Kings xx. 1.

⁶ Ch. i. 7. and Justin Martyr Dialog. cum Tryphon. p. 349.

⁷ Jotham reigned sixteen years, Ahaz sixteen, and Hezekiah twenty-nine.

⁸ Tertul. de Patient. § xiv. p. 148. edit. Par. 1664. Origen. Epist. ad African. tom. i. p. 20. edit. Par. 1733. et Hom. 1. in Isaiam, p. 108. tom. iii. Chrysost. ad Cyriac. Epist. 125. p. 668. tom. iii.

⁹ Heb. xi. 37. and Pearce on this verse.

St. Justin the martyr affirmed, that the Jews had erased the disgraceful circumstance from the sacred books; and it is not improbable, that the bold spirit of invective, and the high character by which Isaiah was distinguished, might have irritated a jealous and revengeful monarch to this act of impious barbarity; though the opprobrium of the deed must be much aggravated, if St. Jerom be not mistaken in relating, that Manasseth had received the daughter of Isaiah in marriage¹. It is added, also, that Manasseth endeavoured to justify his cruelty, by pretending that he condemned the Prophet for saying, that "he had seen the Lord sitting upon a throne²;" contrary, as the tyrant affirmed, to what is said in Exodus, "there is no man shall see me, and live³;" thus hypocritically attempting to veil his malice under an appearance of piety. However this may have been, the story was certainly embellished with many fictitious circumstances; as, that the Prophet was sawed asunder in a cedar which had opened itself to receive him in his flight; and other particulars fabricated in superstitious reverence for his memory. Epiphanius and Dorotheus, who give this account, add, that he was buried near Jerusalem, under the oak Rogel, near the royal sepulchre, on the river Siloe, at the side of Mount Sion; and that he remained in his tomb to their time; contrary to what others report of his being carried away to Paneada, towards the sources of the Jordan; and from thence to Constantinople, in the thirty-fifth year of Theodosius the younger, A.D. 442.

The name of Isaiah is, as Vitranga has remarked, in

¹ Hieron. in Isai. iii.

² Chap. vi. 1.

³ Exod. xxxiii. 20.

some measure expressive of his character, since it signifies, "the salvation of Jehovah." He has always been considered as a Prophet of the highest eminence ⁴; and looked up to as the brightest luminary of the Jewish church. He speaks of himself as enlightened by vision; and he has been emphatically styled the evangelical Prophet ⁵, so copiously and clearly does he describe the Messiah, and characterize his kingdom: favoured, as it were, with an intimate view of the Gospel state, from the very birth of our Saviour, "to be conceived of a virgin ⁶," to that glorious and triumphant period, when every Gentile nation shall bring a clean offering to the Lord, and "all flesh shall come to worship" before him ⁷. The author of Ecclesiasticus, in his fine and discriminating encomium on the prophets, says of Isaiah, that he "was great and faithful in his vision;" and that "in his time the sun went backward, and he lengthened the King's life. He saw by an excellent spirit what should come to pass at the last ⁸." It is certain also that Isaiah, in addition to his other prophetic privileges was endowed with the power of performing miracles ⁹. Besides those that are ascribed to

⁴ Matt. iv. 14. Rom. x. 16. xxviii. 25. Matt. viii. 17. Luke iv. 17. Acts xxviii. 25. also Vitrina's Proleg. p. 16. 2 Kings xix. 20. xx. 1, 2. et seq. 2 Chron. xxxii. 20. St. Paul cites his work as part of the law. 1 Cor. xiv. 21.

⁵ Hieron. Præf. in Isai. p. 474. tom. i. Epist. xvii. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xxix. Theod. Præf. in Esai. p. 521. tom. iii. St. Jerom in his epistle to Pope Damasus, says, what was figuratively true, that the seraphim who touched Isaiah's lips with fire, conveyed to him the New Testament. Isa. vi. 6, 7.

⁶ Chap. vii. 14.

⁷ Chap. lxvi. 20. 23.

⁸ Ecclus. xlvi. 22. 25. Vid. also, Calmet's Pref. and Lowth's Prælect. 21.

⁹ 2 Kings xx. 11. 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.

him in Scripture, tradition relates, that he supplied the people besieged under Hezekiah with water from Siloam, while the enemy could not procure it¹. It should be observed, that the wife of Isaiah is styled a prophetess²; and the Rabbins maintain, that she possessed the gift of prophecy. He himself appears to have been raised up as a striking object of veneration among the Jews, and to have regulated his whole conduct in subserviency to his sacred appointment. His sons, likewise, were for types³, and figurative pledges of God's assurances; and their names⁴ and actions were designed to awaken a religious attention in the persons whom they were commissioned to address, and to instruct.

¹ Hence, as some have supposed, was the origin of the Pool of Siloam. The word Siloam implies *sent*. Vid. John ix. 7. Every tradition relative to these interesting characters is worth recording.

² Chap. viii. 3.

³ Isaiah viii. 18.

⁴ Chap. vii. 3. **שאר ישוב** signify "a remnant shall return," and the words **מהר שלל חש בן**, which imply "run swiftly to the spoil," were intended to be, in some respects, consolatory and auspicious even to Ahaz and his subjects, notwithstanding their iniquity. On the occasion referred to in this chapter, the Prophet is instructed to impart to that monarch the assurance of the deliverance of Jerusalem then besieged by the confederate kings of Syria and of Israel, and to declare that before the son by whom Isaiah was accompanied, should know how to distinguish between good and evil—both the hostile nations should be deprived of their kings. The Prophet, if we may be allowed to propose an interpretation, supported by good authorities, of a prophecy involved in much obscurity, seems to point to this deliverance as to a sign, that after the termination of the calamities which impended over Judæa, a virgin should conceive and bear a son, and call his name, Emmanuel; and the fulfilment of the first event, certified the miraculous conception and birth of a Saviour, by whom the deliverance of all nations should be effected. Vid. 2 Kings xvi. 5. and xv. 30. Usseii Annales, Vet. Test. ad annum 3262. p. 89. edit. 1650. Kennicott's Sermon on Isaiah vii. 13—16. Oxford, 1765.

Isaiah was animated with the most lively zeal for God's honour and service. He was employed chiefly to preach repentance to Judah ; though he occasionally uttered prophecies against the ten tribes, which in his time constituted the separate kingdom of Israel. In the prudent reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, the kingdom of Judah flourished ; but in the time of Ahaz, Isaiah had ample subject for reproach, as idolatry was established, even in the temple, and the kingdom nearly ruined by the impiety which the king had introduced or countenanced. In the reign of Hezekiah, his endeavours to reform the people were more successful ; and some piety prevailed, till the seduction of Manasseh completed the triumph of idolatry and sin.

There are many historical relations scattered through this book, which illustrate the designs and occasions of the prophecies. The prophetical parts are sometimes considered under five divisions. The first part, which extends from the beginning to the thirteenth chapter, contains five discourses immediately addressed to the Jews and Ephraimites, whom the Prophet addresses on various subjects, in tones of exhortation and reproof. The second part, which extends to the twenty-fourth chapter, contains eight discourses, in which the fate of other nations, as of the Babylonians, Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and Egyptians, is described. The third part, which terminates with the thirty-fifth chapter, contains God's threats denounced against the disobedient Jews, and enemies of the church, interspersed with consolatory promises, which were intended to encourage those who might have deserved God's favour⁵. The

⁵ Isaiah, as well as Nahum, Haggai, and Zechariah, were deemed consolatory Prophets. Vid. Abarben. Præf. in Isai. fol. 2. col. 1.

fourth part, which begins at the fortieth chapter, where the prophetic strain is resumed, describes, in four discourses, the manifestation of the Messiah, with many introductory and attendant circumstances. This division ends at the forty-eighth chapter. The fifth part, which concludes the prophecies, describes more particularly the appearance of our Saviour, and the character of his kingdom. The historical part, which begins with the thirty-sixth, and terminates with the thirty-ninth chapter⁶, relates the remarkable events of those times in which God employed the ministry of Isaiah.

With respect to chronological arrangement, it must be observed, that the first five chapters appear to relate to the time of Uzziah⁷. The vision described in the

lib. i. The remarkable prophecy in the xxxviii chap. 30th ver. on occasion of the invasion of Judæa by Sennacherib, probably in the Sabbatical year, must have imparted peculiar consolation to the Jews under the ravage of a desolating army, and if considered in conjunction with the promise of the prolongation of life for fifteen years to Hezekiah, when lying under the apprehension of death, must have afforded the assurance of immediate relief, and of that tranquil enjoyment, of which Hezekiah lived to partake for a period graciously extended beyond the term of two Sabbatical years. See Allix's *Reflections upon the Books of the Holy Scripture*, part iii. ch. i. p. 226. edit. Oxford, 1822.

⁶ The abrupt conclusion of the thirty-eighth chapter, leads us to suppose that these historical chapters relating to Hezekiah, were inserted from the Second Book of Kings, to illustrate the preceding prophecies. Comp. Isa. xxxvi—xxxix. chapters with 2 Kings xviii. from verse 13 to verse 19 of ch. xx.

⁷ Some think that they belong more properly to the reign of Ahaz. Vid. Taylor's *Scrip. Divin.* p. 328. But the representation of the reign of an apostate king, would, perhaps, have been still more forcible. Vid. 2 Kings xvi. 3. et seq. The descriptions are not too strong for the time of Uzziah, whose individual virtues (of

sixth chapter must have happened early in the reign of Jotham. The next fifteen chapters contain the prophecies delivered under Ahaz; and the prophecies which follow to the end of the book were probably uttered under Hezekiah. Some writers, however, have conceived that the chapters have been accidentally deranged; and it is possible that the predictions were not delivered by the Prophet exactly in the order in which they now stand. Others have attributed the dislocations, if there be any, to the men of Hezekiah, who are said to have collected those Prophecies⁸.

When Isaiah entered on the prophetic office, a darker scene of things began to arise. As idolatry predominated, and the captivity drew near, plainer declarations of God's future mercies were necessary to keep alive the expectations and confidence of the people. In treating of the captivities and deliverance of the Hebrew nation, he is often led to consider those more important captivities and deliverances which these temporal events foreshowed. Hence, with promises and threats of the former, he blends the assurances of final troubles and restoration. From the bondage of Israel, he, likewise, adverts to the bondage under which the Gentile world was held by ignorance and sin; and hence he exhibits, in connected representation, deliverance from particular afflictions, and the general deliverance from sin and death. The present concern is often forgotten in the contemplation of the distant prospect. The Prophet passes with rapidity from the

which indeed the effect was diminished by some misconduct, 2 Chron. xxvi. 1.) could not entirely reform the kingdom, or restore its prosperity. Vid. Hieron. Com. in Isai. vi. p. 57. lib. iii. tom. iii.

⁸ Jacob. Braudingerus in Annal. Typ. Bib. Proph. V. T.

first to the second subject, without intimation of the change, or accurate discrimination of their respective circumstances; as, for instance, in the fifty-second chapter, where the Prophet, after speaking of the recovery from the Assyrian oppression, suddenly drops the idea of the present redemption, and breaks out into a rapturous description of the Gospel salvation which it prefigured; which modern Jewish, as well as Christian writers, have admitted to import spiritual blessings to the Jews, and communion with God, to the Gentiles⁹.

Among the prophecies of Isaiah which deserve to be particularly noted for their especial perspicuity and striking accomplishment, are those in which he foretold the captivities of Israel and Judah¹; and described the ruin and desolation of Babylon², Tyre³, and other nations. He speaks of Cyrus by name, and of his conquests, above 160 years before his birth⁴, in predictions which are supposed to have influenced that monarch to release the Jews from captivity⁵, being probably shown

⁹ Comp. Isa. lii. 7. with Rom. x. 15. Isa. xi. 10. with Rom. xv. 12. Vid. also, chap. xxxiv. xxxv. xl. xlix. Lowth on chap. lii. 13. and Abarbenel, and Kimchi, as quoted by Vitringa, on ch. xlix. 1. p. 561. pars ii. tom. ii. edit. Leovard. 1724.

¹ Chap. xxxix. 6, 7. comp. with 2 Kings xxiv. 13. and Dan. i. 3.

² Chap. xiii. 19—22. xiv. 22—24. xxiii. 13. xlvii. 7, 8. and Lowth Com. and Usser. Ann. ad A.M. 3347. ch. xxiii. See Keppel's Person. Narrat. from India, vol. i. ch. ix. p. 184, 185.

³ To be forgotten for seventy years, and then restored, xxiii. 15. 17.

⁴ Chap. xlv. 28. xlv. 1—5. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. i. St. Jerom has remarked that Xenophon's history is a good comment on this prophecy of Isaiah. It shows that he was with some propriety chosen as "the shepherd of the Lord." Vid. Hieron. in Isai. xlv. lib. xii. p. 332. tom. iii.

⁵ Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. i. Ezra i. 2.

to him by Daniel. But it must be repeated, that the prophecies concerning the Messiah seem almost to anticipate the Gospel and the history of the church to the consummation of all things, so clearly do they fore-show the Divine character of Christ¹; to be beholden as God²; his inexplicable generation³, yet human descent, and inspired wisdom⁴; his conception and birth by the Virgin⁵; his threefold character of prophet⁶, priest⁷, and king⁸; his advent to be proclaimed by the Baptist⁹; his appointment to preach¹⁰; his attributes and miracles¹¹; his peculiar qualities and virtues¹²; his rejection¹³ and suffering for our sin¹⁴; his death, burial¹⁵, and victory over the grave¹⁶; the effusion of the Holy

¹ Chap. vii. 14. compared with Matt. i. 18—23. and Luke i. 27—35. Chap. vi. ix. 6. xxxv. 4. xl. 3. 9, 10. xlii. 6—8. lxi. 1. comp. with Luke iv. 18. lxii. 11. lxiii. 1—4.

² Chap. xxxv. 4. xl. 9.

³ Chap. liii. 8.

⁴ Chap. xi. 1—3.

⁵ Isaiah vii. 14. comp. with Gen. iii. 15. and Matt. i. 23.

⁶ Chap. xlii. 1. 6. 9. xlix. 1, 2. 6, 7. lv. 4, 5.

⁷ Chap. xl. 11. liii. 10. compare with Eph. v. 2. Heb. x. 5—12.

⁸ Chap. ix. 6, 7. xxxii. 1, 2.

⁹ Chap. xl. 3, 4. comp. with Matt. iii. 3. Mark i. 3. Luke iii.

4. John i. 23. Malachi iii. 1—3. iv. 5, 6.

¹⁰ Chap. lxi. 1, 2.

¹¹ Chap. xi. 2. 4. compare with Luke ii. 52. xxxv. 5, 6. xl. 12. 28.

¹² Chap. xi. 2, 3. xl. 11. xliii. 1—3.

¹³ Chap. vi. 9—12. compare with Mark xiii. 14. Chap. vii. 14, 15. liii. 3.

¹⁴ Chap. l. 6. liii. 4—11. The Ethiopian eunuch appears to have been made a proselyte by St. Philip's explication of this chapter. Vid. Acts viii. 32. The whole of it is so minutely descriptive of Christ's passion, that a famous Rabbi, likewise, on reading it, was converted from Judaism.—Who, indeed, can resist its evidence?

¹⁵ Chap. liii. 8, 9. Matt. xxvii. 57. et Vitranga.

¹⁶ Chap. xxv. 8. liii. 10. 12.

Spirit¹; the rejection of the Jews²; the calling of the Gentile world³; the display of his glory⁴ in the setting up, increase⁵, and perfection⁶ of his kingdom, to be preached in the four quarters of the globe⁷; and the manifestation by his presence of the establishment of an universal Church⁸: each particular specifically pointed out, and pourtrayed with the most striking and discriminating characters. It is impossible, indeed, to reflect on these, and on the whole chain of his illustrious prophecies, and not to be sensible that they present the most incontestable evidence in support of Christianity.

The style of Isaiah has been universally admired as the most perfect model of the sublime; it is distinguished for all the magnificence, and for all the sweetness of the Hebrew language⁹. The variety of his images, and the animated warmth of his expressions, characterize him as unequalled in point of eloquence; and if we were desirous of producing a specimen of the dignity and beauties of the Scripture language, we

¹ Chap. xxxii. 15. xliv. 3.

² Chap. lxv. 2. 7.

³ Chap. xlix. 5—12. 22—24. lxv. 1.

⁴ Chap. xlix. 7. 22, 23. lii. 13—15. liii. 4, 5.

⁵ Chap. ii. 2—4. ix. 7. xlii. 4. xlvi. 13.

⁶ Chap. ix. 2. 7. xi. 4—10. xvi. 5. xxix. 18—24. xxxii. 1. xl. 4, 5. xlix. 9—13. li. 3—6. lii. 6—10. lv. 1—3. lix. 16—21. lx. lxi. 1—5. lxv. 25.

⁷ Chap. lxvi. 19—23.

⁸ Chap. xxvii. 12, 13. lxii. lxv. 17—25.

⁹ See particularly in chap. xiv. the striking representation of the vanquished foes of Belshazzar, rising from their tombs to meet and deride the king of Babylon when descending to the grave, after his glory had departed from him, which is unparalleled in its effect. See Lowth's *Prælect.* 28.

should immediately think of having recourse to Isaiah¹. St. Jerom speaks of him as conversant with every part of science²; and, indeed, the marks of a cultivated and improved mind are stamped on every page of his book; but these are almost eclipsed by the splendour of his inspired knowledge. In the delivery of his prophecies and instructions, he utters his enraptured strains with an elevation and majesty which unhallowed lips could never have attained³. From the grand exordium in the first chapter, to the concluding description of the

¹ The superior eloquence of Isaiah appears remarkably on a comparison of the eleventh and thirty-fifth chapters of his work, with the fourth Eclogue of Virgil; in which the poet has introduced thoughts, imagery, and diction, strikingly similar, indeed, to those employed by Isaiah, but infinitely inferior as to the effect produced. Virgil is supposed to have borrowed from the predictions of the Cumæan Sibyl that description of the Golden Age which he represents as ready to commence with the birth of some illustrious personage, (as, perhaps, the expected offspring of Octavia, or of Scribonia.) The images, however, were so appropriate to the Messiah and his kingdom, that they must have been derived from a sacred source, though it is not necessary to consider them as the result of immediate inspiration. The Sibylline verses might have been fragments of inspired prophecies spread abroad in Greek verse by the Hellenistical Jews. Virgil might have collected ideas with regard to the expected Messiah from the Jews in general, and particularly from Herod, who was about this time at Rome, and whose sons when residing there were kindly received by *Pollio*, and by Augustus himself. Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xv. c. x. p. 696. edit. Hudson. Or, lastly, the poet, or other learned persons among the Romans, might have had some knowledge of the Septuagint version of the Scriptures, since they were inquisitive after all kinds of literature. Vid. Lowth's *Prælect.* 21. Chandler's *Vindic.* ch. ii. § 3. et Postscript, p. 44. and Cudworth's *Intel. Syst.* book i. c. iv. § 16.

² Hieron. Prolog. in Isai. tom. iii. p. 3.

³ Chap. vi. 6, 7.

Gospel, to “be brought forth” in wonders, and to terminate in the dispensations of eternity; from first to last, there is one continued display of inspired wisdom, revealing its oracles and precepts for the instruction of mankind.

The prophecies of Isaiah were modulated to a kind of rhythm, and are evidently divided into certain metrical stanzas or lines⁴.

The Greek version of Isaiah appears to have been made long after that of the Pentateuch; it is a very lax and inaccurate translation, and was probably composed after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes⁵.

Isaiah, besides this book of prophecies, wrote an account of the actions of Uzziah⁶; this has perished with some other writings of the Prophets, which, as probably not dictated by inspiration, were never admitted into the canon of Scripture. Some apocryphal books have likewise been attributed to him; among others, that so often cited by Origen, and other fathers, entitled the Ascension of Isaiah⁷; not to mention a

⁴ Vitranga, Proleg. in Jesaiam, p. 8. Lowth's Preface, and Scaliger's Animad. in Chron. Euseb.

⁵ Those of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodosion, are now lost.

⁶ 2 Chron. xxvi. 22. et Vitrin. Proleg. 3. Dr. Kennicott supposes that Isaiah composed the 89th Psalm on the approach of Rezin and Pekah to Jerusalem.

⁷ Written probably by a Jew converted to Christianity; it was translated from the Ethiopic by the learned Archbishop of Cashel, and published at Oxford in 1819. He supposes it to have been the work of a Christian writer. Written, according to the archbishop's opinion, about A. D. 68. Origen Epist. ad African. p. 20. note^a, tom. i. Hieron. in Isai. 64. lib. xvii. p. 473. tom. iii. Epiphan. Hæres. 40. and 67.

later book, called the Vision of Isaiah ^s, which is only a compilation from his works. These are probably attributed to him on as insufficient grounds as are the Books of Solomon and Job.

^s This was published at Venice. Vid. Sixt. Senens. Bib. Sanct. in Esai. lib. ii. p. 69. edit. Colon. 1586.

OF THE

BOOK OF THE PROPHET

JEREMIAH.

JEREMIAH was the son of Hilkiāh ; and it has been supposed of that Hilkiāh ¹ who was high priest in the reign of Josiah, but certainly he was of sacerdotal extraction ; and a native of Anathoth, a village about three miles from Jerusalem, appointed for the priests, in that part of Judæa, which was allotted to the tribe of Benjamin ². He was called to the prophetic office, nearly at the same time with Zephaniah, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah the son of Amon, A.M. 3376. Like St. John the Baptist and St. Paul, he was even in his mother's womb ordained a Prophet to the Jews and other nations ³. He was not, however, expressly addressed by the word of God till about the fourteenth year of his age ; when he diffidently sought

¹ 2 Kings xxii. 4. Clemens Alexand. Strom. lib. i. p. 390. edit. Potter. Sixt. Senens. Bib. Sanct. p. 12.

² Hieron. in Jerem. i. 1, 2, 3. Josh. xxi. 13. 18. xviii. 28.

³ Jerem. i. 5. and Hieron. in Jerem. c. 1. v. 5. lib. i. p. 528. tom. iii.

to decline the appointment on account of his youth, till influenced by Divine encouragement, he obeyed, and continued to prophesy upwards of forty years, during several successive reigns of the degenerate descendants of Josiah ; to whom he fearlessly revealed those marks of the Divine vengeance which their fluctuating and rebellious conduct drew on themselves and their country ⁴. After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, he was suffered by Nebuchadnezzar to remain and lament the miseries and desolation of Judæa, from whence he sent consolatory assurances to his captive countrymen. He was afterwards, as we are by himself informed, carried with his disciple Baruch into Egypt ⁵, by Johannan the son of Kareah, who, contrary to his advice and prophetic admonition, removed thither from Judæa.

Many circumstances relative to Jeremiah, are interspersed in his own writings, and many more which deserve but little credit, have been recorded by the Rabbins and others ⁶. He appears during his whole life to have been exposed to cruel and unjust persecutions from the Jews, and especially from those of his own village ⁷, having particularly excited the resentment of the princes, priests, and false prophets, on account of the zeal and fervour with which he censured their incorrigible sins, and predicted the judgments of the

⁴ Chap. xxi. 4—11. xxiv. 8—10. xxxii. 3, 4. xxxiv. 2—5. comp. with Ezek. xii. 13. and Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. cap. v. vi. vii. p. 441—447. edit. Hud. et lib. xi. p. 468. Jer. xxxvi. 30, 31.

⁵ Chap. xliii. 3—7. Abarbenel erroneously asserts that Jeremiah was carried into captivity with Jechoniah, or Jehoiachin ; contrary to the Prophet's own account. Vid. Abarb. in Ezek.

⁶ 2 Macc. ii. 1—7. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. xxxix.

⁷ Chap. xi. 21. Luke iv. 24.

Almighty against them; and he is sometimes provoked to break out into the most feeling and bitter complaints of the treatment which he received⁸. The author of *Ecclesiasticus*⁹, alluding to his sufferings, remarks, "that they intreated him evil, who nevertheless was a Prophet sanctified in his mother's womb." According to the account of St. Jerom, he was stoned to death at Tahpanhes¹, a royal city of Egypt, about 586 years before the birth of Christ: either by his own countrymen, as is generally maintained, or by the Egyptians, to both of which people he had rendered himself obnoxious by the terrifying prophecies which he had uttered. The chronicle of Alexandria relates, that the Prophet had incensed the Egyptians by foretelling that their idols should be overthrown by an earthquake when the Saviour of the earth should be born and placed in a manger. His prophecies, however, which are still extant concerning the conquests of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, in this respect "the servant of God," must have been sufficient to excite the fears and hatred of those against whom they were uttered. It was added to this account which Ptolemy received, that Alexander the Great, visiting the tomb of Jeremiah, and hearing that he had uttered predictions concerning his person, ordered that the Prophet's urn should be removed to Alexandria, and built a magnificent monument to his

⁸ Chap. xx. 7—18.

⁹ Ecclus. xlix. 7.

¹ Jerem. xliii. 7. 9. Heb. xi. 37. Tahpanhes is contracted to Hanes by Isaiah, ch. xxx. 4. It is supposed by many to have been the city which was afterwards called Daphnæ Pelusiacæ. Other traditions relate, that he was thrown into a pit and transfixed with darts. Vid. Gregent. Disput. cum Herban. Jud. p. 19. edit. Lutet. Paris. 1586.

memory². This was soon rendered an object of general attention; and as a reverence for the Prophet's character invested it with imaginary influence, it became celebrated as a place of miracles³. Other accounts, however, relate, that the Prophet returned unto his own country; and travellers are still shown a place in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, where, as they are told, Jeremiah composed his prophecies; and where Constantine erected a tomb to his memory.

Jeremiah, who professes himself the author of these prophecies⁴, employed Baruch as his amanuensis in committing them to writing⁵. He appears to have made at different times, collections of what he had delivered. The first seems to have been composed in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when the Prophet was expressly commanded by God to write upon a roll, all the prophecies which he had uttered concerning Israel, Judah, and other nations⁶; this he did by means of Baruch. But this roll being burnt by Jehoiakim⁷, another was written under Jeremiah's direction, with

² Abulfaragius Hist. Orient. Dynast. III. Jean Mosque Pré. Spirituel, chap. lxxviii. Raleigh's Hist. of the World, book ii. p. 555.

³ Crocodiles and serpents were supposed to be unable to live near it, and the dust of the place is now deemed a cure for the bite of the asp. Many other similar fictions were engendered by superstitious respect for the Prophet's memory.

⁴ Chap. i. 1. 4. 6. 9. xxv. 13. xxix. 1. xxx. 2. li. 60.

⁵ Chap. xxxii. 4. xlv. 1.

⁶ Jerem. xxxvi. 2. xxv. 13.

⁷ Chap. xxxvi. 23. The Jews instituted an annual fast in commemoration of the burning of this roll, which is still observed in December, on the 29th day of the month Casleu. Vid. Prid. vol. i. part i. p. 50. fol. 1717.

many additional particulars⁸. In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the prophet appears to have collected into one book all the prophecies that he had delivered before the taking of Jerusalem⁹. To this, probably, he afterwards added such further revelations as he had occasionally received during the government of Gedaliah, and during the residence in Egypt, the account of which terminates with the fifty-first chapter. The fifty-second chapter, which is compiled from the five last chapters of the second book of Kings¹, was probably not written by Jeremiah, as it contains in part a repetition of what the Prophet had before related in the thirty-ninth and fortieth chapters of his book, and some circumstances which, as it has been supposed, did not happen till after the death of Jeremiah. It is evident also from the intimation conveyed in the last verse "thus far the words of Jeremiah," that his book there terminates. The fifty-second chapter was, therefore, probably added by Ezra², as an exordium to the Lamentations. It is, however, a very useful appendage, as it illustrates the accomplishment of Jeremiah's prophecies relative to the captivity and the fate of Zedekiah.

The prophecies, as they are now placed, appear not to be arranged in the chronological order in which they were delivered³. Whether they were originally so compiled by Jeremiah, or Ezra; or whether they had been accidentally transposed, cannot now be determined.

⁸ Chap. xxxvi. 32.

⁹ Chap. i. 3.

¹ 2 Kings xxiv. 18—20. xxv.

² Sixtus Senensis, without a sufficient authority, attributes it to Baruch, Bib. Sanct. lib. i. p. 12.

³ Origen Epist. ad African. p. 15. tom. i. Hieron. Prolog. in Jerem. p. 526-7. tom. 3. Blaney's Translat. of Jeremiah.

It is generally maintained, that if we consult the dates of their publication, they should be placed thus :

In the reign of Josiah, the first twelve chapters.

In that of Jehoiakim, chapters xiii.—xx.—xxi. ver.

11—14. xxii. xxiii. xxv. xxvi. xxxv. xxxvi. xlv.—
xlix. ver. 1—33.

In that of Zedekiah, chap. xxi. 1—10. xxiv. xxvii.—

xxxiv. xxxvii.—xxxix. xlix. vers. 34—39. l. and li.

Under the government of Gedaliah, chap. xl.—xliv.

Jeremiah does not seem to have received any revelations from God in the short intermediate reigns of Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, or of Jeconiah, the son of Jehoiakim.

The prophecies which related to the Gentiles are contained in the forty-sixth and five following chapters, being placed at the end, as in some measure unconnected with the others. But in some copies of the Septuagint ⁴ these six chapters follow immediately after the thirteenth verse of the twenty-fifth chapter. Though the Israelites had been carried captive before Jeremiah began to prophesy, he occasionally addressed the ten tribes, as some remains of them were still left in Samaria.

The prophecies of Jeremiah, of which the circumstantial accomplishment is often specified in the Old and New Testament, are of a very distinguished and illustrious character. He foretold the fate of Shallum ⁵, of Jehoiakim ⁶, Coniah ⁷, and Zedekiah ⁸; he predicted

⁴ As in the Vatican and Alexandrian.

⁵ Ch. xxii. 11, 12.

⁶ Ch. xxii. 18, 19.

⁷ Ch. xxii. 24—30. comp. with Ezek. xxi. 2. the Prophet apparently predicting the fate of the mother (v. 26.) and a failure in the issue and sovereignty of Coniah.

⁸ Ch. xxxiv. 2—5. comp. with 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20. 2 Kings xxv. and Jerem. xix. 6, 7. lii. 11.

the fate of Pharaoh-hophra ¹, the Babylonish captivity, the complicated miseries ² which were to precede and characterize the desolation of Jerusalem, when its temple should be destroyed, and the city be deserted of God, like Shiloh when deprived of the ark ³; and the fate of those who should remain there ⁴; the precise period of the detention of the people in Assyria ⁵; and their return to their fields and vineyards ⁶. He described the destruction of Babylon ⁷; and the downfall of many nations ⁸; in predictions, of which the gradual and progressive completion kept up the confidence of the Jews in the accomplishment of those prophecies which he delivered relative to the Messiah and his period ⁹. He foreshowed the miraculous conception of Christ ¹⁰; the virtue of his atonement; the spiritual character of his covenant; and the inward efficacy of his laws ¹¹.

Jeremiah, contemplating those calamities which impended over his country, represented in the most descriptive terms, and under the most expressive images,

¹ Ch. xliv. 30. Herod. lib. ii. c. 163 and 169.

² Ch. xiv. 1—12. xxi. 8—10. xix. 6, 7.

³ Ch. vii. 12—14.

⁴ Ch. xxvii. 6—8.

⁵ Ch. xxv. 11, 12. comp. with Dan. ix. 2. xxiv. 10. Ezra i. 1. Prid. Con. An. 518. Newton's 8th and 11th Dissert. on the Prophecies.

⁶ Ch. xxxii. 14. 15.

⁷ Ch. li. 47. and Herod. lib. i. c. 191. p. 90. See also Keppel's Person. Narrat. from India, vol. i. c. 9. p. 199—202.

⁸ Ch. xxv. 12. Vid. also ch. ix. 26. xxv. 19—25. xlii. 10—18. xlv. and following chapter. And Newton's Dissert. XII.

⁹ Ch. xxiii. 5, 6. xxx. 9. xxxi. 15. xxxiii. 14—18. xxxiii. 9. 26. Huet. Demon. Evang. Prop. vii. § 16. p. 312. edit. 1679.

¹⁰ Ch. xxxi. 22. ¹¹ Ch. xxiii. 5, 6. xxxi. 31—36. xxxiii. 8.

the destruction that the invading enemy should produce. He bewailed in pathetic expostulation, the shameless adulteries which had provoked the Almighty, after long forbearance, to threaten Judah with inevitable punishment, at the time that false prophets deluded the nation with the promises of "assured peace," and when the people, in impious contempt of "the Lord's word," defied its accomplishment¹. Jeremiah intermingles with his prophecies some historical relations relative to his own conduct, and to the completion of those predictions which he had delivered. The reputation of Jeremiah had spread among foreign nations, and his prophecies were deservedly celebrated in other countries². Many heathen writers have likewise undesignedly borne testimony to the truth and accuracy of the prophetic and historical descriptions of the book³.

The style of Jeremiah, though not devoid of occasional splendour and sublimity, is certainly inferior to that of Isaiah⁴; it is more plain and simple than that of any of the Prophets, excepting perhaps that of Obadiah. St. Jerom⁵ objects a certain rusticity of expression to him; but which it would not be easy to point out. His images are, perhaps, less lofty, and his

¹ Chap. xxxvi. 22, 23. xxviii. 4—6.

² Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. ix. c. 39. p. 454.

³ Vid. Herodotus, Xenophon Cyropæd. Joseph. Ant. lib. x. c. vi. Compare particularly the accounts of the taking of Babylon, as described prophetically by Jeremiah in chap. l. 24. 38. li. and historically by Herodotus, lib. i. c. 190, 191.

⁴ Lowth's Prælect. 21. xliii. 10—13.

⁵ Hieron. Prolog. in Jerem. p. 551-2. tom. 1. Cunæus de Repub. Heb. lib. iii. cap. vii. Critic. Sacr. tom. 8. p. 915.

expressions less dignified than those of some others of the sacred writers; but the character of his work, which breathes a tenderness of sorrow calculated to awaken and interest the milder affections, leads him to reject the majestic and declamatory tone in which the prophetic censures were sometimes conveyed. St. John seems to have borrowed his expressions with respect to the fate of Babylon, and to have applied them to the fall which he foretels of the spiritual city which Babylon prefigured⁶. The holy zeal of the Prophet is, however, often excited to a very vigorous eloquence in inveighing against the frontless audacity with which men gloried in their abominations⁷. The first part of the book is chiefly poetical, and, indeed, nearly one half of the work is composed in some kind of measure. The historical part, towards the middle of the work, is written with much simplicity of style. The six last chapters, which are entirely in verse, contain several predictions delivered in a high strain of dignity. The descriptions of Jeremiah have all the vivid colouring that might be expected from a painter of contemporary scenes. The historical part has some characters of antiquity that ascertain the date of its composition.

⁶ Chap. li. 6. 59. compare with Rev. xviii.

⁷ The Prophet is very animated in his admonitions against idolatry, being willing to caution the people against the temptations which they would encounter in the captivity. It is remarkable, that the eleventh verse of the tenth chapter, which contains a pious sentiment which the Jews are directed to utter as a profession of their faith, is written in Chaldee; that they might be furnished with the very words that they should answer to those who would seduce them.

The months are reckoned by numbers; a mode which did not prevail after the captivity, when they were distinguished by Chaldaic names. Besides the eleventh verse of the tenth chapter, which is written in Chaldee, there are likewise a few Chaldaic expressions, which about the time of Jeremiah must have begun to vitiate the Hebrew language.

Jeremiah appears to have been pre-ordained as a Prophet both to the Jews and the Gentiles⁸. He certainly delivered many prophecies relative to foreign nations. His name translated is "He shall exalt Jehovah:" and his whole life was spent in endeavouring to promote God's glory. His reputation was so considerable that some of the fathers⁹ fancifully supposed that as his death is no where mentioned in Scripture, he was living in the time of Christ, whom, as the Gospel informs us, some supposed to have been this Prophet¹. They likewise applied to him and Elias what St. John mysteriously speaks of two witnesses that should prophesy 1260 days²: which superstitious fictions serve, at least, to prove the traditional reverence that was entertained for the memory of the Prophet; who long afterwards continued to be venerated in the Romish church as one of the greatest saints that had flourished under the old covenant; as having lived not only with the general strictness of a Prophet, but, as was believed, in a state of celibacy³; and as having terminated his righteous ministry by martyrdom.

⁸ Chap. i. 5—10.

⁹ Victorin. *Biblioth. Patr.* tom. 3. p. 140. in *Apoc.* cap. xi. 3. Plures apud Hilar. in *Matt.* cap. xx. p. 710. edit. Paris. 1693.

¹ *Matt.* xvi. 14.

² *Rev.* xi. 3.

³ *Chap.* xvi. 2. How far the restriction here enjoined was of a

typical, or temporary and local nature is uncertain. The Chaldee Paraphrase supposes the Prophet to have had children. Vid. Com. on Jerem. xxxvii. 12.

[The Rechabites, who are mentioned in the 35th chapter, have been found in Arabia by Niebuhr and Wolfe, where they exist as a separate and distinct people to this day, as a living monument of the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prediction, that "Jonadab the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me for ever." Jerem. ch. xxxv. 19.]

OF THE
BOOK OF THE LAMENTATIONS
OF
JEREMIAH.

THE Jews denominate this book A-i-cah¹, from the first word of the text; or sometimes they call it Kinoth², which implies tears, alluding to the mournful character of the work, of which one would conceive, says Lowth, “that every letter was written with a tear, every word the sound of a broken heart³.” The book was composed by Jeremiah, as he informs us in the title, and as the unvaried tradition of the church declares. It contains passages expressive of the afflictions to which the prophet was subjected⁴. The style, indeed, itself, indicates the same hand which composed the preceding book. Upon what occasion these Lamentations were produced, cannot be positively determined. In the Second Book of Chronicles⁵, it is said, that “Jere-

¹ אִיכָה, How.

² קִינוֹת, Kinoth. Θρηνησι, Lamentations.

³ Also Gregor. Nazianz. Orat. iv. p. 125. and Orat. xii. p. 201.

⁴ Chap. iii. 1—7. 55, 56. compare with Jer. xxxviii. 7—12.

⁵ 2 Chron. xxxv. 25.

miah lamented for Josiah;" and Josephus⁶, and other writers⁷, suppose that the work which we now possess was written upon the occasion of that monarch's death; maintaining that the calamities which only three months after attended the deposition of Jehoahaz, were so considerable as to correspond with the description of the Prophet, though they are not minutely detailed in the sacred history. The generality of the commentators are, however, of a different opinion; and, indeed, Jeremiah here bewails the desolation of Jerusalem; the captivity of Judah; the miseries of famine; and the cessation of all religious worship, in terms so forcible and pathetic, that they appear rather applicable to some period after the destruction of Jerusalem⁸, when, agreeably to his own predictions, every circumstance of complicated distress overshadowed Judæa⁹. But upon whatever occasion these Lamentations were composed, they are evidently descriptive of past events, and cannot be considered as prophetic elegies.

Some Jewish writers imagined, that this was the book which Jeremiah dictated to Baruch, and which was cut and burnt by Jehoiakim¹. But there is no foundation for this opinion, for the book dictated to

⁶ Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. x. c. v. p. 441.

⁷ Hieron. in Lament. Proœm. p. 801-2. tom. 5. R. Selom. Lament. ch. iv. 20. Michaelis note in Prælect. 23. Usser. Annal. A. M. 3394. and Lam. ch. v. 7. which Michaelis considers as a complaint more just and reasonable in the time of Josiah than in that of Zedekiah; but neither this nor ch. iv. 20. are more applicable to the former than the latter king.

⁸ Chap. i. 1. 3. 6. 12. 18. ii. 5, 6, 7. 16. iv. 6. 10. 22. v. 6. 18.

⁹ Jer. xx. 4. may allude to the fate of Zedekiah.

¹ Jerem. xxxvi. 4—23.

Baruch contained many prophetic threats² against various nations of which there are no traces in this book. In the Greek, Arabic, and Vulgate versions, there is a spurious prefatory argument, which is not in the Hebrew, nor in the Chaldee paraphrase, any more than in the version of St. Jerom, who followed the Hebrew. It may be thus translated: "It came to pass, that after Israel had been carried away captive, and Jerusalem became desolate, the Prophet Jeremiah sat weeping, and bewailed Jerusalem with this lamentation, and bitterly weeping and mourning, said as follows." This was probably added by the Greek translators, in lieu of the fifty-second chapter of Jeremiah's prophecies, which they rejected from this to the preceding book³. The lamentations were certainly annexed originally to the prophecies of Jeremiah, and were admitted together with them into the Hebrew canon as one book. The modern Jews, however, place this work in their copies among other smaller tracts, such as Ruth, and Canticles, &c. at the end of the Pentateuch, having altered the arrangement of the books of Scripture from the order which they held in Ezra's collection.

With respect to the plan of this work, it is composed after the manner of funeral odes, though without any very artificial disposition of its subject. It appears to contain the genuine effusions of real grief; in which the author, occupied by his sorrow, attends not to exact connexion between the different parts, but pours out whatever presents itself. He dwells upon the same

² Chap. xxxvi. 2.

³ Huet. Prop. iv. p. 214. edit. Par. 1679.

ideas, and amplifies the same thoughts, by new expressions and figures, as is natural to a mind intent on subjects of affliction. There is, however, no wild incoherency in the contexture of the work : but the transitions are easy and elegant ; it is, in fact, a collection of distinct sentences, probably uttered at different times, upon the same subject, which are properly entitled Lamentations.

The work is divided into five parts : in the first, second, and fourth chapters, the Prophet speaks in his own person ; or by a very elegant and interesting personification, introduces Jerusalem, as speaking ⁴. In the third chapter, a chorus of the Jews speaks as one person, like the Coryphæus of the Greeks. In the fifth, which forms a kind of epilogue to the work, the whole nation of the captive Jews is introduced in one body, as pouring out complaints and supplications to God. Each of these five parts is distributed into twenty-two periods or stanzas, in correspondence with the number of the Hebrew letters. In the three first chapters, these periods generally consist of triplets ⁵. In the four first chapters, the initial letter of each period follows the order of the alphabet ; and in the third chapter, each verse of the same stanza begins with the same letter ⁶. In the fourth chapter, all the

⁴ In the first verse, Jerusalem is described as sitting pensive and solitary, as Judæa was afterwards represented on the coins of Vespasian and Titus. Sitting was a natural posture of sorrow ; and the picture of sedentary affliction was familiar to the Jews. Vid. Job ii. 13. Psalm cxxxvii. 1. Ezek. iii. 15. Addison's Dialogue on Medals, vol. i. p. 518.

⁵ There is, however, in each of the two first chapters, one tetra-colon, or stanza of four lines, in chap. i. 1, in chap. ii. p.

⁶ The third chapter has sixty-six verses in our translation, because

stanzas are evidently distiches⁷, as also in the fifth, which is not acrostick. The intention of this acrostick, or alphabetic arrangement, was probably to assist the memory in retaining sentences not much connected⁸, and the same method was adopted, and is still used by the Syrians, Arabians, and Persians⁹. It is remarkable, also, that though the verses of the fifth chapter are short, yet those of the other chapters seem to be nearly half as long again as those which usually occur in Hebrew poetry; and the Prophet appears to have chosen this measure as more flowing, and accommodated to the effusions of sorrow, and, therefore, more agreeable to the nature of a dirge¹.

This poem affords the most elegant variety of striking images that ever, probably, was displayed in so small a compass². The scenes of affliction, the circumstances of distress, are painted with such beautiful combination, that we contemplate, everywhere, the affecting picture of desolation and misery. The Prophet reiterates his complaints in the most pathetic style; and aggravates his sorrow with a boldness and force of de-
each of the twenty-two periods is divided into three verses, according to the initial letters. It is remarkable that, in the second, third, and fourth chapters, the initial letter **ב** is placed before **א**, contrary to the order observed in the alphabet, and in the first chapter, as well as in the acrostic Psalms.

⁷ The stanza **ב**, as now read, cannot well be divided into verses.

⁸ The Lamentations appear to have been sung in public service. Vid. Lowth's *Prælect.* 22. and Preface to Isaiah, p. 31.

⁹ Assemani *Bibliothec. Oriental.* tom. iii. p. 63. 180. 188. 328.

¹ The Lamentations which occasionally occur, appear all to be composed of this long measure, which may be supposed to have been properly the elegiac measure of the Hebrews. See 2 Sam. i. 19—27. Ezek. xxviii. 11—19.

² Lowth's *Prælect.* 22.

cription that correspond with the magnitude and religious importance of the calamities exposed to view. In the instructive strain of an inspired writer, he reminds his countrymen of the grievous rebellions that had provoked the Lord "to abhor his sanctuary;" confesses that it was of God's mercies that they were not utterly consumed: and points out the sources of evil in the iniquities of their false prophets and priests. He then with indignant irony threatens Edom with destruction for rejoicing over the miseries of Judæa; opens a consolatory prospect of deliverance and future protection to Zion; and concludes with a most interesting address to God, to "consider the reproach of his people, and to renew their prosperity."

It is worthy to be observed, that Jeremiah, in endeavouring to promote resignation in his countrymen, represents his own deportment under afflictions, in terms which have a prophetic cast, so strikingly are they descriptive of the patience and conduct of our Saviour under his sufferings³. The Prophet, indeed, in the meek endurance of unmerited persecution, was an illustrious type of Christ.

Jeremiah is represented in some titles to have been the author of the 137th Psalm⁴; as likewise to have composed the 65th⁵ in conjunction with Ezekiel; but

³ Chap. i. 12. iii. 1—30.

⁴ This is ascribed to him in some Latin copies, as it formerly was in some Greek manuscripts; but it seems to have been written by some captives at Babylon.

⁵ The titles in the Greek and Latin copies which assign this Psalm to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, are of little or no authority. The Psalm was probably written by David, upon the occasion of some gracious rain after a drought, or perhaps by Haggai, or some Prophet after the return from the captivity. Vid. Calmet.

probably neither of them were the production of his pen. The author of the second Book of Maccabees ⁶, speaks of some recorded instructions of the Prophet, which are no longer extant. In the Vatican library are some compositions in Greek, attributed to Jeremiah, containing spurious letters from Baruch and Ebedmelech to the Prophet, and supposititious answers from him.

⁶ 2 Macc. ii. 1—7.

OF THE
BOOK OF THE PROPHET
EZEKIEL.

EZEKIEL, who was the third of the great Prophets, was the son of Buzi, a descendant of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi, that is, of the sacerdotal race. He is said to have been a native of Serara, and to have been carried away captive at the age of thirteen to Babylon, with Jehoiachin, king of Judah, A.M. 3406¹. He settled, or was placed, with many others of his captive countrymen, on the banks of the Chebar², a river of Mesopotamia; where he was favoured with the Divine revelations which are described in this book. He is supposed to have prophesied during a period of twenty-one years. He appears to have been mercifully raised up to animate the despondency of his contemporaries in their sufferings and afflictions; and to assure them that they were deceived in supposing, according to the representations of false prophets, that their countrymen who

¹ Pseudo-Epiphanius in Vit. Prophet. Joseph. lib. x. c. vi. p. 443.

² Called, by Ptolemy and Strabo, Chaboras, or Aboras; and by Pliny, Cobaris. It flows into the eastern side of the Euphrates at Circesium, or Carchemish, almost 200 miles to the north of Babylon.

remained in Judæa were in happier circumstances than themselves. With this view he describes that melancholy scene of calamities which was about to arise in Judæa; and thence proceeds to predict the universal apostacy of the Jews, and the total destruction of their city and temple; adverting, also, occasionally, to those punishments which awaited their enemies; and interspersing assurances of the final accomplishment of God's purpose, with prophetic declarations of the advent of the Messiah, under whom Israel and Judah should be reunited, and the people be purified and regenerated to a new spirit, and the sanctuary of God be established in the midst of them for ever³.

The name of Ezekiel⁴ was happily expressive of that inspired confidence and fortitude which he displayed, as well in supporting the adverse circumstances of the captivity, as in censuring the sins and idolatrous propensities of his countrymen. He began to deliver his prophecies about eight or ten years after Daniel, in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity; and as some have supposed, in the thirtieth year of his age⁵.

³ Chap. xxxvi. 25—38.

⁴ Ezekiel, *יְחִזְקִאל*. The word seems to imply the power of God girding with strength. It is compounded of a verb in the future tense, importing to bind, and of the name of God.

⁵ Ezek. i. 1. Hieron. in loc. lib. i. p. 699. tom. 3, &c. Usher, Prideaux, and others, reckon the thirty years here spoken of, as well as the forty days or years mentioned in chap. iv. 6. from the time of the covenant made by Josiah in the eighteenth year of his reign. Vid. 2 Kings xxiii. 3. according to which computation this thirtieth year corresponds with A.M. 3410, and the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity. Other chronologists, however, conceive it to be the thirtieth year of Ezekiel's age; or the thirtieth year of Nabopolassar's reign; and others the thirtieth year from the Jubilee. Vid. Usher ad A.M.

The Divine instructions were first revealed to him in a glorious vision, in which he beheld a representation, or as he himself reverently expresses it, “the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord,” attended by his cherubims symbolically pourtrayed. “The word of the Lord came expressly” unto him, and he received his commission by a voice, which was followed by a forcible influence of the Spirit, and by awful directions for his conduct⁶. He appears to have executed his high trust with great fidelity. The author of *Ecclesiasticus*⁷ says of him, that “he directed them who went right; which may be considered as a merited encomium on the judgment and industry with which he endeavoured to instruct and guide his countrymen in righteousness. He is reported by some writers to have presided in the government of the tribes of Gad and Dan in Assyria; and among other fabulous miracles, to have punished them for idolatry by a fearful destruction produced by serpents. In addition to these popular traditions it is reported, that his countrymen were so incensed by his reproaches as to put him to a cruel death⁸. In the time of Epiphanius it was superstitiously believed that his remains were deposited in the same sepulchre with those of Shem and Arphaxad, which was supposed to be situated between the river Euphrates and that of Chaboras; and which was much resorted to⁹, not only by the Jews, but also by the

3409. Prid. An. A.C. 594. Scaliger Can. Isag. p. 28. Ezekiel usually dates his prophecies from the æra of his appointment to the prophetic office.

⁶ Chap. i. ii. and iii.

⁷ Eccclus. xlix. 9. et Arnald.

⁸ Sixtus Senensis. Huet, &c.

⁹ Benjamin Tudela relates, that a magnificent roof was built to it

Medes and Persians : who revered the tomb of the Prophet with extravagant devotion.

The authenticity of Ezekiel's book will not admit of a question. He represents himself as the author, in the beginning and other parts of it, and justly assumes the character and pretensions of a Prophet¹; as such he has been universally regarded. A few writers, indeed, of very inconsiderable authority, have fancied, from the first word of the Hebrew text, in which they suppose the initial letter Vau to be a connexive particle, that what we possess of Ezekiel is but the fragment of a larger work. But there is no shadow of foundation for this conjecture, since it was very customary to begin a discourse in that language with the particle Vau², which we properly paraphrase, "Now it came to pass." It has been asserted, likewise, on Talmudical authority, that certain Rabbins deliberated concerning the rejection of this book from the canon, on account of some passages in it which they conceived to be contradictory to the principles of the Mosaic law³. If they had any such intention, they were soon

by Jechoniah ; and, likewise, a synagogue and library were erected there, in which was deposited a manuscript of Ezekiel's prophecies, that was read on the day of expiation. The pretended tomb of Ezekiel is still shown, about fifteen leagues from Bagdad.

¹ Chap. i. 1. ii. 2. 5. Clemens Romanus 1st Epist. ad Cor. c. 17.

² Jonah i. 1. and the beginning of most of the historical books of Scripture, also Calmet Preface sur Ezechiel.

³ Comp. Ezek. xviii. 20. with Exod. xxxiv. 7. The people whom Ezekiel addressed, presumptuously complained that they were punished for the sins of their forefathers, though, in truth, they had merited their captivity by persisting in evil. God, therefore, very consistently with his former declarations, threatened by Ezekiel to make such distinction between the righteous and the wicked, that

convinced of their mistake, and gave up the design. But the Jews, indeed, did not suffer the book, or at least the beginning of it, to be read by any who had not attained their thirtieth year⁴; and restrictions were imposed upon commentators who might be disposed to write upon it.⁵

St. Jerom has remarked, certainly with great truth, that the visions of Ezekiel are sometimes very mysterious, and of difficult interpretation, and that they may be reckoned among the things in Scripture, which are "hard to be understood⁶." Ezekiel himself, well aware of the mysterious character of those representations which he beheld in vision, and of the necessary obscurity which must attend the description of them to others, humbly represented to God that the people accused him of speaking darkly "in parables⁷." It appears to have been God's design to cheer the drooping spirits of his people, but only by communicating such encouragement as was consistent with a state of punishment, and calculated by indistinct intimations, to keep alive a watchful and submissive confidence. For this reason, perhaps, the prophecies of Ezekiel, which were revealed amidst the gloom of captivity, were designedly obscure in their nature; but though

each man should be sensible of having deserved his sufferings. And he assured the people, with especial reference to eternal punishment, that "the soul that sinned it should die;" and that "the son should not bear the iniquity of his father;" and that each should be responsible for his own conduct.

⁴ Calmet's Dict. D'Herbelot. Bibliot. Orient. p. 942.

⁵ Cunæus de Rep. Heb. 17. ap. Crit. Sac. tom. viii. p. 848. edit. Lond. 1660.

⁶ Hieron. Præfat. et Prolog. in Ezech. Villalpandus, &c.

⁷ Ezek. xx. 49.

mysterious in themselves, they are related by the Prophet in a plain and historical manner. He seems to have been desirous of conveying to others the strong impressions which he received, as accurately as they were capable of being described.

The representations which Ezekiel beheld in vision, are capable of a very interesting and instructive illustration from other parts of Scripture: as may be seen in the commentaries of various writers who have undertaken to explain their allusive character; the figurative directions also, which the Prophet received in them with relation to his own conduct, were very consistent with the dignity of his character, and the design of his mission. Some of these directions were given, indeed, only by way of metaphorical instruction; for when Ezekiel is commanded to “eat the roll of prophecy,” we readily understand that he is enjoined only to receive, and thoroughly to digest its contents⁸; and when he professes to have complied with the command, we perceive that he speaks only of a transaction in vision. With respect to some other relations of this nature contained in Ezekiel’s book⁹, whether we suppose them to be descriptive of real, or of imaginary events, they are very reconcileable with what may be conceived to have been the Divine intention in the

⁸ Chap. iii. 1—3. see also Jer. xv. 16. and Rev. x. 8—10.

⁹ In the general preface to the Prophets, Ezekiel is supposed to have actually removed his household stuff, as thus prophesying by a sign; and this supposition seems to be authorized by the account. Vid. Ezek. xii. 7. and Waterland in Ezek. So, also, when deprived of his wife, he certainly refrained from the customary show of grief, as a sign of the unprecedented and inexpressible sorrow under which the Jews should pine away on the destruction of their temple. Vid. chap. xxiv. 16. et seq.

employment of the Prophet. On a supposition that they were real, we may reasonably suppose a miraculous assistance to have been afforded when necessary; and if we consider them as imaginary, they might be represented equally as emblematical forewarnings revealed to the Prophet¹.

The Book of Ezekiel is sometimes distributed by the following analysis, under different heads. After the three first chapters, in which the appointment of the Prophet is described, the wickedness and impending punishment of the Jews, especially of those remaining in Judæa, are represented under different parables and visions, to the twenty-fourth chapter, inclusive; with occasional intimations of the establishment of the Christian church². The inspired writer details in the exact order of succession, and in a manner which remarkably corresponds with the predictions and relations of Jeremiah, the siege of Jerusalem; the famine by which it should be accompanied³; the destruction of the city⁴; the miseries which awaited those that should remain in Judæa, and the avenging sword which should pursue the remnant that should flee into Egypt⁵. The dethroning of the royal race of Judah, expressed by the removal of the diadem, and the translation of the sovereignty from the family of Coniah, the profane

¹ Chap. iv. and v.

² Chap. xvii. 22—24.

³ Chap. iv. Jerem. xxix. 15—19. xxxvii. 21. xxxviii. 9. Lament. v. 10.

⁴ Chap. xxiv. 6—14. xx. 45—49. xxi. 2—27. Jerem. vi. 1—6. xxi. 10. 14. xxxii. 28, 29. xxxix. 1—9. xlv. 6. lii. 4—7. 13, 14.

⁵ Chap. v. 2. 12. Jer. xlii. 16, 17, 18. xliii. 5. 7, 8. 27. for the completion of these prophecies, consult Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. ix. § 7. p. 454. et ch. xi. § 1. p. 459. et contra Apion. lib. i. § 19. p. 1342. edit. Hudson.

prince of Israel, to one who should be exalted from a low degree, (a subversion of power to continue till He should come in whom the legal right of inheritance was vested, that is, the Messiah,) are most distinctly and emphatically foretold ⁶. From thence to the thirty-second chapter, the Prophet turns his attention to those nations who had unfeelingly triumphed over the Jews in their affliction: predicting that destruction of the Ammonites, Moabites, and Philistines, which Nebuchadnezzar effected; and particularly, he foretels the ruin and desolation of Tyre ⁷, and of Sidon; the calamities and fall of Egypt ⁸, and the base degeneracy of its future people, in a manner so forcible, in terms so accurately and minutely descriptive of their several fates and present condition, that it is highly interesting to trace the accomplishment of these prophecies in the accounts which are furnished by historians and travellers.

From the thirty-second to the fortieth chapter, Ezekiel inveighs against the hypocrisy and murmuring spirit of his captive countrymen. Having heard in

⁶ Chap. xxi. 25—27. see Luke i. 32. John i. 49.

⁷ Ezek. xxvi. xxvii. and xxviii. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. cap. xi. cont. Apion. lib. i. Newton's XIth Dissert. on Prophecy. Prid. Con. An. 573. Shaw's Travels, p. 330. Maundrell, p. 48, 49. Volney, vol. ii. ch. xxix. Bruce's Travels, Introd. p. 59.

⁸ Chap. xxix. and xxxii. Newton's Dissert. XII. and every history, and every account of Egypt. Herodotus particularly relates the accomplishment of those prophecies which Jeremiah and Ezekiel uttered concerning Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt. Vid. Jerem. xliv. 30. and Herod. lib. ii. ch. 161—169. p. 183. edit. Wessel. Hophra is called Apries by Herodotus, who, says the historian, *was destined to misfortune*. See also the testimonies of Megasthenes and Berosus in Newton. And Diodorus Siculus, Biblioth. Hist. lib. i. c. 68. p. 79.

Assyria the fall of Jerusalem, he foreshows further inflictions of Divine wrath⁹, but encourages the people to resignation by promises of deliverance¹, by assurances that they should be corrected (as they effectually were) from their propensities to idolatry², and by intimations of spiritual redemption³, and a renewal of the whole nation as by a resurrection from the grave⁴. In the two last chapters of this division, under the promised victories to be obtained over Gog and Magog⁵, he appears to predict some fearful conflicts which are to precede the final return of the Jews from their dispersion, to be segregated under one sovereign and

⁹ Chap. xxx. 21—29.

¹ Chap. xxxvi. 11. xxxvii. 12. 14 21.

² Chap. xvi. 41.

³ Chap. xxxiv. 4. xxiii. et seq. xxxvii. 24. et seq.

⁴ Chap. xxxvii.

⁵ Rev. xx. 7, 8. Some conceive that these prophecies of Ezekiel related to the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. Calmet applies them to Cambyzes. Gog, is, however, generally supposed to represent the Turks; who derive their origin from the Tartars, a race of the Scythians, who were the descendants of Magog, the son of Japhet. Vid. Gen. x. 2. It has been supposed that the word Gog was applied to the people, and Magog to the land. We learn from Pliny, that Scythopolis and Hieropolis were called Magog, after they were taken by the Scythians. The other Prophets speak of some future enemy of the Jews and church under a similar description; but in what manner this magnificent prophecy is to receive its completion time only can explain. Vid. Lowth in loc. Jerem. xxvii. and xxx. Joel iii. Micah v. Rev. xx. Mede conceives that the Gog and Magog mentioned in the Revelation of St. John, presignify some enemies different from those foretold under these names by Ezekiel; and that St. John's prophecies apply to some unconverted heathens to appear in opposition to the church towards the conclusion of the Millennium. Vid. de Gog et Magog Conject. Mede's Works, vol. ii. book iii. Rennell's Geographical System, p. 3.

one shepherd⁶ in the latter days; with an obscurity, however, that can be dispersed only by the event.

The eight last chapters of this book detail the description of a very remarkable vision of a new temple and city; of a new religion and polity, under the particulars of which is shadowed out the establishment of a future universal church⁷.

Josephus says, that Ezekiel left two books concerning the captivity⁸; and the author of the Synopsis attributed to Athanasius, supposes that one book has been lost; but as the nine last chapters of Ezekiel constitute in some measure a distinct work, probably Josephus might consider them as forming a second book.

⁶ Chap. xxxiv. 28—31. xxxvii. 18—28. xxxix. 23—29.

⁷ This obscure vision of Ezekiel is generally supposed to contain the description of a temple, corresponding in its structure and dimensions with that of Solomon, but occasionally exceeding it. In some circumstances it seems to have coincided with particulars of description in the ark, so that an analogy may be thought to have been preserved through successive ages, and an importance attached to this correspondence among the Jews, of which we cannot form an adequate conception. The Prophet, by presenting to the captives this delineation of what had been "the desire of their eyes," reminded them of the loss which they had suffered from their unrighteousness; and afforded a model, upon which the temple might again rise from its ruins; as it did, with less magnificence, especially as to subordinate parts, in the time of Zerubbabel. The proportions specified appear to be in exact accordance with the rules of architecture, some of which might possibly have been first laid down in this plan. Under the particulars detailed by Ezekiel, we often discover the œconomy of a spiritual temple, which should again be filled "with the glory of the Lord" coming from the East. Vid. ch. xliii. 1—4. Rev. iv. 2, 3. xi. 19. xiv. 17, &c. Capellus, and Commentators at large. See the temple of Ezekiel, by Solomon Bennett, London, 1824.

⁸ Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. v. p. 441. edit. Hudson.

It deserves particularly to be remarked, that we are informed by Josephus, that the prophecy in which Ezekiel⁹ foretold that “Zedekiah should not see Babylon, though he should die there,” was judged by that monarch to be inconsistent with that of Jeremiah, who predicted that “Zedekiah should behold the king of Babylon, and go to Babylon¹.” But both were exactly fulfilled; for Zedekiah did see the king of Babylon at Riblah, and then being deprived of his eyes, he was carried to Babylon, and died there². From this account it appears that Ezekiel’s prophecies were transmitted to Jerusalem, as we know that Jeremiah’s were sent to his countrymen in captivity³; an intercourse being kept up, especially for the conveyance of prophetic instruction; for imparting what might console misery, or awaken repentance; and it was, probably, on the ground of this communication, that the Talmudists supposed that the prophecies of Ezekiel were arranged into their present form, and placed in the canon by the elders of the great synagogue⁴.

The style of this Prophet is characterized by Bishop Lowth as bold, vehement, and tragical⁵; as often worked

⁹ Ezek. xii. 13.

¹ Jer. xxxiv. 3.

² Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. vii. p. 444. c. viii. p. 449.

³ Jerem. xxix. 1. and Hieron. in Ezech. xii. 7. tom. iii. lib. iii. p. 766.

⁴ Bava Bathra, c. i. and in Gemar. Isidor. Orig. lib. vi. cap. ii.

⁵ The Ezekiel who is quoted by Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebius as the tragic poet of the Jews, was a different person from the Prophet. Some suppose that he was one of the seventy translators under Ptolemy. His work, in which he describes the Exodus of the Jews, under the conduct of Moses, is still extant. Vid. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. p. 414. edit. Potter. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. xxviii. Fabric. Bib. Græc. lib. ii. c. xix. Johan.

up to a kind of tremendous dignity. His book is highly parabolical, and abounds with figures and metaphorical expressions. Ezekiel may be compared to the Grecian *Æschylus*; he displays a rough but majestic dignity; an unpolished though noble simplicity. He is inferior, perhaps, in originality and elegance, to others of the Prophets; but unequalled in that force and grandeur for which he is particularly celebrated. He sometimes emphatically and indignantly repeats his sentiments; fully dilates his pictures; and describes the adulterous manner of his countrymen under the strongest and most emphatical representations that the license of the eastern style would admit. The middle part of the book is, to a certain extent, poetical; and contains even some perfect elegies⁶; though his thoughts are, in general, too irregular and uncontrolled to be chained down to rule, or fettered by language.

Some persons have conceived that Pythagoras imbibed his knowledge concerning the Mosaic law from Ezekiel; and that the Prophet was the same person with Nazarat⁷, under whom Pythagoras is related to have studied⁸. Pythagoras certainly did visit Babylon, and, according to many calculations, was contemporary with the Prophet.

Eusebius. *De Orig. Sac. Script.* lib. x. c. 26. p. 377. edit. Lugdun. 1641.

⁶ Chap. xxvii. xxviii. 12—19.

⁷ Called Zabrat^{us}, by Porphyry in *Vita Pythagor.* and Zaratus, by Plutarch. Vid. Huet. *Prop.* iv. p. 220. edit. 1679.

⁸ Clem. Alex. *Strom.* lib. i. p. 358. Some conceive that Pythagoras might have been born about nine years after Ezekiel's departure for the captivity; and that he might have visited Babylon very young, and have conversed with Ezekiel when the Prophet was in years.

OF THE
BOOK OF THE PROPHET
DANIEL.

THAT Daniel collected these prophecies into their present form is evident, since, in various parts of the book, he speaks of himself in the character of their author¹; and has been so considered in all ages of the church. Some Jewish writers, indeed, upon a mistaken notion that prophecies were never committed to writing out of the limits of Judæa, pretend that the book was composed by the men of the great synagogue, as likewise those of Esther and Ezekiel². It was, however, unquestionably admitted into the Hebrew canon as the authentic production of Daniel; and it is cited as his work in the New Testament³.

In the time of Josephus, Daniel was esteemed as one of the greatest of the Prophets⁴; but since the

¹ Dan. viii. 1, 2. 27. ix. 2. x. 2. xii. 5, &c.

² Bava Bathra, cap. in Gemara, and Rabbins. Josephus assures us, that Daniel himself committed his prophecies to writing. Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. cap. x. xi. p. 465.

³ Matt. xxiv. 15. Mark xiii. 14.

⁴ Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. cap. xi. p. 464-5.

period in which the historian flourished, the Jews, in order to invalidate the evidence that results from the Prophet's writings in support of Christianity, have, on the authority of a few doctors, agreed to class him among the Hagiographi⁵; which decision, however, does not, upon their own rules, affect his pretensions to be considered as an inspired writer. The reason which, among others, the Jews produce to authorize this degradation is, that Daniel lived in the Babylonish court in a style of magnificence inconsistent with the restrictions observed by the Prophets⁶; and though the Divine will was revealed to him by an angel, yet, as the Prophet himself called this revelation a dream, the Jewish writers, by some unwarranted distinction, consider this as a mode of revelation inferior to any of those specified in God's address to Moses⁷. Without staying to refute these absurd fancies, it is only necessary to observe, that the exact accomplishment of Daniel's many remarkable predictions would have sufficiently established his right to the character of a Prophet, even if he had not been expressly distin-

⁵ Maimon. More Nevoch, par. ii. cap. xlv. Theod. cap. ult. Dan. tom. ii. p. 697. Yet Daniel is reckoned among the Prophets in some Talmudical books. Vide Megilla, c. ii. Jacchiades in Dan. i. 17. In the second century, Aquila and Theodotion placed him among the Prophets in their Greek translations, agreeably to his rank in the Septuagint; and Melito found him reckoned in the same class. Vid. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. xxvi. Hieron. Præf. in Dan. Epiphani. Hæres. lib. i. tom. i. p. 19. edit. Paris, 1622. De Pond. et Mens. n. 4. 162. Chand. Vindic. ch. i. § 3.

⁶ Grot. Præf. ad Com. in Esai. Huet. Demon. Evang. Prop. iv. cap. xiv. p. 223. edit. Par. Kimchi Præf. in Psalm.

⁷ Numb. xii. 6. Maimon. More Nevoch, par. ii. c. xlv.

guished as such by the sacred writers⁸; and by Christ himself, who spoke agreeably to the opinion of the Jews, his contemporaries, in testimony to the prophetic character of Daniel⁹.

Daniel was a descendant of the kings of Judah. He is related to have been born at upper Bethoron¹, which was in the territory of Ephraim. He was carried away captive to Babylon in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, A.M. 3398; probably in the eighteenth or twentieth year of his age²; and on account of his birth, wisdom, and accomplishments³, he was selected to stand in the presence of Nebuchadnezzar; so that in him and his companions was fulfilled that prophecy in which Isaiah declared to Hezekiah that "his issue should be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon⁴."

By the signal proofs which Daniel gave of an excellent spirit, and by the many extraordinary qualities which he possessed, he conciliated the favour of the Persian monarchs; was elevated to high rank⁵, and

⁸ Heb. xi. 33, 34. 2 Pet. i. 21.

⁹ Matt. xxiv. 15. Mark xiii. 14.

¹ Josh. xvi. 5. Sixtus Senensis affirms, after Epiphanius, that Daniel was born at Betheber, near Jerusalem. Vid. Bib. Sanct. lib. i. p. 13. Michaelis considers this as an improbable tradition. Vid. Michael. Præf. p. 8.

² Aben Ezra.

³ Dan. i. 3, 4. Ezek. xiv. 14. xxv. 3. xxviii. 3.

⁴ 2 Kings xx. 18. Isa. xxxix. 6, 7. The word eunuch formerly was a general title for the royal attendants. The same word in the original is applied to Potiphar. Vid. Gen. xxxix. 1. Vid. also Acts viii. 27.

⁵ Daniel was styled by the angel, "the man of my desire, or esteem;" an epithet which Mahomed afterwards presumptuously assumed. The word Daniel implies God's judgments. (Vide Mi-

entrusted with great power. In the vicissitudes of his life, as in the virtues which he displayed, he has been thought to have resembled Joseph: like him he lived amidst the corruption of a great court; and preserved an unshaken attachment to his religion, in a situation embarrassed with difficulties, and surrounded by temptations. He publicly professed God's service, in defiance of every danger; and predicted his fearful judgments in the very face of intemperate and powerful tyrants⁶. It may be collected from the pensive cast of his writings, that he was of that melancholy disposition which might be expected to characterize the servants of the true God amidst scenes of idolatry. He experienced, through his whole life, very signal and miraculous proofs of Divine favour; and was looked up to by the Persians, as well as by his own countrymen, as an oracle of inspired wisdom⁷; he contributed much to spread a knowledge of God among the Gentile nations. Many writers have supposed that Zoroaster, the celebrated founder or reformer of the Magian religion, was a disciple of Daniel, since Zoroaster was evi-

chael. Præf. in Dan. and Gierus in Dan.) The name given to him in the Babylonish court was Belteshazzar, a name which, as Nebuchadnezzar remarked in his decree, was derived from the name of his god (Bel). Vid. Dan. iv. 8. It was usual among the Babylonians so to denominate persons after the name of their deities, as Nebuchadnezzar from Nebo, and Evil-Merodach, from Merodach. Vid. Isa. xlv. 1. Jerem. l. 2. It was also customary, among the eastern nations, for the kings to distinguish their favourites by new names when they conferred on them new dignities; and the Mogul and Persian monarchs still adhere to the custom. Gen. xli. 45. Esther ii. 7. Scaliger de Emend. Temp. lib. v. and vi. Cellar. ad Curtium, lib. vi. cap. 6.

⁶ Chap. iv. 20—28. v. 18—29.

⁷ Dan. v. 11. Ezek. xiv. 14. xxviii. 3. Daniel was very young when Ezekiel bore this testimony to his praise.

dently well acquainted with many revealed truths, and borrowed from the sacred writings particulars for the improvement of his religious institutes ⁸.

Daniel appears to have attained a great age, as he prophesied during the whole period of the captivity. He probably, however, did not long survive his last vision concerning the succession of the Kings of Persia, which he beheld in the third year of Cyrus ⁹ A.M. 3470, when the Prophet must have reached his ninetieth year. As Daniel dates this vision by a Persian æra, it was apparently revealed to him in Persia; and though some have asserted that he returned from the captivity with Ezra, and took upon him the government of Syria¹, it is probable that he was too old to avail himself of the decree of Cyrus², however he might have been accessary in obtaining it; and that agreeably to the received opinion, he died in Persia. Epiphanius and others affirm that he died at Babylon, and they say that his sepulchre was to be seen there many ages after in the royal cave ³. But it is more probable, according

⁸ Selden *De Baal et Belo Syntag.* 2. vol. ii. p. 329, &c. J. Drusii *Tetragram. Crit. Sac.* tom. viii. p. 2148.

⁹ Chap. x. 1. xii. 13. Michael. in *Jerem. Disc. Prelim.* § 21.

¹ D'Herbelot. *Biblioth. Oriental.* p. 283.

² The Daniel mentioned by Nehemiah, ch. x. 6. was a different person from the Prophet, being probably the same with Daniel, the son of Ithamar, spoken of by Ezra, ch. viii. 2. The Belesis, likewise, mentioned by Diodorus, differed from the Prophet in his period and character.

³ Epiphanius. *Sixt. Senens. Bib. Sanct. lib. i.* p. 14. It appears, however, from other writers, that the sepulchre of the Persian kings was near Persepolis. Vid. *Diodor. Sic. lib. xvii.* p. 215. Reland. in *Palæst. lib. iii.* p. 635. Strabo relates, that Cyrus was buried at Persepolis, and that his monument was there seen by Alexander. Vid. *Strab. lib. xv.* p. 1035. His successors were, perhaps, buried at Susa.

to the common tradition, that he was buried at Susa, or Sushan, where certainly he sometimes resided ⁴, perhaps as governor of Persia; and where he was favoured with some of his last visions. Benjamin Tudela, indeed, informs us ⁵, that he was shown the reputed tomb of Daniel, at Tuster (the ancient Susa) on the Tigris; where likewise, as we are assured by Josephus, was a magnificent edifice in the form of a tower, which was said to have been built by Daniel ⁶, and which served as a sepulchre for the Persian and Parthian Kings. This, in the time of the historian, retained its perfect beauty, and presented a fine specimen of the Prophet's skill in architecture.

The Book of Daniel contains a very interesting mixture of history and prophecies; the former being introduced as far as was necessary to describe the conduct of the Prophet, and to show the design and occasion of his predictions. The first six chapters are chiefly historical; though, indeed, the second chapter contains the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream which was revealed to the Prophet; and in which, after having contemplated the fall of preceding empires, which illustrated the power of God who removeth and

⁴ Chap. viii. 2. 8. Shushan was the capital of Elam, or Persia, properly so called. It was taken from Astyages, King of Media, by Nebuchadnezzar, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah. Vid. Jerem. xlix. 34—39. It afterwards revolted to Cyrus. Vid. Xenophon. Cyropæd. lib. v.

⁵ Benjam. Tudel. Itiner. p. 78. et Abulfar. Hist. Oriental. Dynast. 5.

⁶ Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. xi. p. 464. The present copies of Josephus, indeed, place this edifice in Ecba'tana, but probably the historian originally wrote Susa; for St. Jerom, who professes to copy his account, reads Susa, which was in the Babylonish empire. Vid. Hieron. Com. in Dan. viii. 2. tom. iii. p. 1104.

setteth up kings as seemeth good to him, he was enabled to foretel future revolutions, which should continue to prepare the way, by an invisible hand, for the establishment of that dominion which was finally to break in pieces all those nations, among which the Roman power should be distributed.

The four historical chapters which succeed, relate the miraculous deliverance of Daniel's companions from the furnace⁷; the remarkable and predicted punishment of Nebuchadnezzar's arrogance, operating to contrition⁸; the impiety and portended fate of Belshazzar⁹;

⁷ Chap. iii. In this miracle was shown a particular proof of the accomplishment of a prophetic assurance of Isaiah, and some mysterious representation was at the same time manifested of the Son of God, who had called upon his servants to confide in him as their Redeemer. See Isaiah, chap. xliii. 1, 2.

⁸ It has been usually supposed that the punishment inflicted on Nebuchadnezzar was that species of madness which is called Lycanthropy. This disorder operates so strongly on those affected by it, as to make them fancy themselves wolves, and run howling and tearing every thing in extravagant imitation of those animals. Vid. Sennertij Institut. Medic. lib. ii. pars 3. sect. 2. cap. iv. tom. i. p. 421. Calmet. Dissertat. sur la Metamorph. de Nebuchodon. tom. vi. p. 622. Pausan. in Arcad. lib. viii. p. 600, 601. Ovid. Metam. lib. i. l. 232, et seq. But it should seem from the account, that the Divine threats were fulfilled in a more exact and literal sense; and that Nebuchadnezzar was actually driven from society, till his affections were brutalized and his appearance changed. Scaliger conceives, that this metamorphosis is alluded to by Abydenus, who remarks, on the authority of the Chaldæan writers, that Nebuchadnezzar, after having uttered a prophecy relative to the destruction of the Babylonish empire by Cyrus, *disappeared* (παραχρήμα ἠφάνιστο). Vid. Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. ix. c. xli. p. 457. edit. Par. 1628. Scaliger's notes upon the ancient fragments in the appendix to his work, de Emendatione Temporum.

⁹ The death of Belshazzar is related by Xenophon nearly in the

and the Divine interposition for the protection of Daniel in the lions' den¹. The events which are related were such as must have excited strong impressions among the heathen, of the attributes of God, and have produced acknowledgments of the irresistible power of Him, before whom all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing². They demonstrated the still continued protection which He afforded to his people in captivity, showing that his care was particularly extended to those who preserved an adherence to his worship, and zeal for his service; that He was ever ready to hear their supplications, to deliver them from the greatest difficulties and dangers, and to encourage a constant reliance on Himself. These relations are followed by a remarkable record of a vision, in which communication was imparted to the Prophet concerning the protection afforded to the Hebrew church

same manner as it is described by Daniel. Vid. *Histor. lib. vii.* and many other particulars recorded in this book are represented in a similar way by heathen historians, as St. Jerom has shown by many references. The eastern kings had, however, many titles, assumed on various occasions; they are, therefore, sometimes spoken of in this book, as in other parts of Scripture, under titles different from those by which they are distinguished in profane history; and probably the sacred writers chose to characterize wicked princes by those obnoxious appellations which they assumed in honour of their idols; as in the instance of Evil-Merodach and Belshazzar. Belshazzar was probably the son of Evil-Merodach, by Nitocris, and the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, whose son (or descendant) he is called in Scripture. Vid. Bishop Hallifax's second Sermon on Prophecies concerning the Christian Religion.

¹ Daniel's deliverance from the den of lions, as well as that of his friends from the flames, was long celebrated among the Jews. Vid. 1 Macc. ii. 59, 60. and 3 Macc. vi. 3—5.

² Chap. ii. 47. iii. 26—29. iv. 34—37. vi. 26, 27.

during the captivity, under the ministry of Providence, resisting the spiritual enemies combined against its welfare³. All these accounts are written with a spirit and animation highly interesting, and even with dramatic effect; we seem to be present at the scenes described. The whole work is enriched with the most exalted sentiments of piety; and with the finest attestations to the praise and glory of God.

The peculiar sanctity of Daniel's character, his firm faith and confidence in God, manifested at a time of great despondency, seem to have obtained from the Almighty many signal deliverances, calculated to revive the dejection of his captive countrymen, and many extraordinary revelations with respect to the advent of Christ, and the circumstances of his kingdom. To him it was given to record distinct representations of the Messiah in his Divine and human character⁴: to him it was allowed not only to foreshow the first advent of the Mediator who was "to finish the transgression, to make reconciliation for iniquity," and "to be cut off, but not for himself⁵," but also to unfold the scene, when he should appear coming in clouds to the Father, to receive "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him⁶."

Daniel flourished during the successive reigns of several Babylonish and Median kings, to the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus; in the beginning of whose reign he probably died. The events recorded in the sixth chapter were coeval with Darius the Mede; but in the

³ Chap. x. 13. 21. xi. 1. xii. 1.

⁴ Chap. iii. 25. vii. 13.

⁵ Chap. ix. 24. 26.

⁶ Chap. vii. 13, 14. Matt. xxviii. 18. Acts i. 9. ii. 34. vii. 56. Ephes. i. 20—22. Phil. ii. 9—11. Heb. i. 3. Rev. xix. 16.

seventh and eighth chapters Daniel returns to an earlier period, to relate the visions which he beheld in the three first years of Belshazzar's reign⁷; and those which follow in the four last chapters were revealed to him in the reign of Darius.

The last six chapters of this book are composed of prophecies delivered at different times, all of which, however, are, in some degree, connected as parts of one grand scheme, in which the interests of the Hebrew and Christian Churches are concerned. They extend through many ages; and exhibit under the most striking representations the fall of successive kingdoms; they characterize in descriptive terms the four great monarchies of the world, to be succeeded by that kingdom which is an everlasting dominion, and which shall not be destroyed⁸; they point out even intermediate subdivisions of empire, particularly that of the four kingdoms into which the empire of Alexander should be broken, and which should "stand up, but not in his power"⁹; they predict the persecution of the Jews, under Antiochus Epiphanes¹; the desolation of Jerusalem, and of the sanctuary². They foreshow the power and destruction of Antichrist, in predictions repeated and extended by St. John³; and conclude with a distinct assurance of a general resurrection to a life

⁷ Michæel. Præf. in ch. vii. Hieron. Com. in c. vii. tom. iii. p. 1098.

⁸ Chap. vii. 13, 14, 27.

⁹ Chap. viii. 8, 22.

¹ Chap. viii. 9, 12, xi. 15.

² Chap. ix. 26. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. ch. xi. p. 455, 456.

³ Dan. passim, and Bishop Andrews's Respons. ad Bellarm. Apol. p. 334. et Revel. The prophecies concerning the Antichrist are usually applied to the Papal power prefigured by Antiochus Epiphanes. Vid. chap. viii. 23—25. xi. 36—45.

life of everlasting glory, or of everlasting shame and contempt ⁴, when a lustre of peculiar glory shall be conferred on those by whose wisdom many shall be converted to righteousness ⁵.

The prophecies of Daniel were in many instances so exactly accomplished, that those persons who would have otherwise been unable to resist the evidence which they disclosed in support of our religion, have not scrupled to affirm, that they must have been written subsequently to those occurrences which they so faithfully describe ⁶. But this groundless and unsupported assertion of Porphyry, who in the third century wrote against Christianity, serves but to establish the character of Daniel as a great and illustrious Prophet; and Porphyry, by confessing and proving from the best historians, that all which is included in the eleventh chapter of Daniel relative to the Kings of the north, and of the south, of Syria, and of Egypt, was truly and in every particular, acted and done in the order there related, has undesignedly contributed to the reputation of those prophecies of which he attempted to destroy the authority; for it is contrary to all historical testimony, and contrary to all probability, to suppose that the Jews would have admitted into the canon of their

⁴ Dan. xii. 2. 13.

⁵ Chap. xii. 4.

⁶ Hieron. Præfat. in Daniel, tom. iii. p. 1073. The first chapter has by some been thought to have been written after the time of Daniel, because it speaks of the Prophet in the third person, and says that he continued in the first year of Cyrus, (that is, perhaps, to the third year of his reign over the Medes, and to the first over Babylon;) but these words might well proceed from Daniel, as he lived beyond that period. The concluding verse of the sixth chapter might equally have proceeded from Daniel, speaking of himself in the third person.

sacred writ, a book which contained pretended prophecies of what had already happened⁷. Indeed, it seems impossible that these prophecies should have been written after the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, since there can be little doubt that they were translated into Greek near a hundred years before the period in which he lived; and that translation was in the possession of the Egyptians, who entertained no kindness for the Jews, or their religion⁸. Those prophecies also, which foretold the victories and dominion of Alexander⁹, were shown to that conqueror himself by Jaddua, the high-priest, as we learn from Josephus¹, and the Jews

⁷ The names of the musical instruments mentioned in this book, have some resemblance to those of Grecian instruments; but as colonies of Ionians, Dorians, and Æolians, were settled in Asia, long before the time of Daniel, technical names might easily be communicated from them to the Babylonians; or rather, as the East was the source of music, and the words appear to be of eastern etymology, they might be originally derived from the East to the Greeks. Vid. Marsham. Can. Chron. Sæc. 13. and Chandler's Vindic. of Def. chap. i. sect. 2.

⁸ St. Jerom informs us, that the Septuagint version of Daniel was rejected by the church, for that of Theodotion. Vid. Hieron. on Dan. iv. 8. tom. iii. p. 1088. The Septuagint was admitted into Origen's Hexapla, and from his time fell into discredit. Before it was in general use, the Latin version seems to have been made from it, and it was cited by the earliest writers. The version of Daniel was, therefore, probably made with the rest of the prophetic books, which there is good authority to believe were all translated before the time of Euergetes II. Vid. Prol. in Ecclus. Euseb. Dem. Evan. lib. viii. p. 331. Clemens Roman. epist. i. c. 34. Justin Martyr. Dialog. cum Trypho, edit. Oxon. p. 87. 241. Chand. Vind. ch. i. sect. 3.

⁹ Chap. viii. 5. xi. 3. Lloyd's Letter to Sherlock. Chandler's Vindic. ch. ii. sect. 1. Bayle's Dict. art. Macedo. note°.

¹ Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. cap. xi. p. 504. lib. xi. cap. viii. Newton's Diss. vol. ii. Diss. xv. p. 36.

thereupon obtained an exemption from tribute every sabbatical year, and the free exercise of their laws. Many other prophecies in the book have likewise been fulfilled since the time of Porphyry².

Daniel not only predicted future events with singular precision, but likewise accurately defined the time in which they should be fulfilled, as was remarkably exemplified in that illustrious prophecy of the seventy weeks³, in which he prefixed the period for “bringing in everlasting righteousness by the Messiah,” “for sealing up the vision and prophecy,” and for “anointing the most holy,” as well as in some other mysterious predictions, which probably mark out the time or duration of the power of Antichrist⁴, and, as some suppose, of the commencement of the millennium, or universal reign of saints, which they conceive to be foretold; for the explanation of which we must wait the event.

From the fourth verse of the second chapter, to the end of the seventh chapter of this book, Daniel wrote his history originally, in the Chaldaic, or Syriac lan-

² Porphyry was born at Tyre, A.D. 233. Some of his objections relate to the spurious parts of Daniel. St. Jerom agrees with him in applying the eleventh chapter as far as the twenty-first verse to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. The Prophet afterwards speaks of the Romans and of the Antichrist, as he does of the latter in the eighth and twelfth chapters. Vid. Bishop Chandler's *Vindic. of Def.* and S. Chandler's *Vindication of the Antiquity and Authority of Daniel's Prophecies*.

³ Chap. ix. 24—27. For computations concerning the exact accomplishment of this amazing prophecy, vid. Usser. *Annal.* V. T. ad. Ann. Per. Jul. 4260. Prid. *Connect. Ann.* A. C. 458. Lloyd's *Chron. Tables*, Num. 3, 4. Basnage's *Diss. on Seventy Weeks*. Calmet's *Dissert. sur les Sept. Sem.-Petav. de Doct. Temp.* lib. xii. Raymundi Martinii *Pugio Fidei*, pars 3. c. 3. p. 269. edit. Lipsiæ, 1687, &c.

⁴ Ch. vii. 25. viii. 14. xii. 7. Lowth, &c.

guage⁵; and, indeed, the greatest part of the book bears marks of the Chaldaic idiom; as might well be expected from an author who had so long resided in Chaldæa. Since all the historical particulars which concerned the Babylonish nation were probably recorded in the annals of that government⁶; Daniel might possibly have extracted some passages, as, perhaps, the decree of Nebuchadnezzar⁷, from those chronicles; and no testimony could be more honourable, or with more propriety be prefixed to his prophecies. As the Jews also in their dispersion had separately intermixed with the natives of Chaldæa, they all understood the language of the country; and must have received so authentic a document of Daniel's fidelity with particular respect. The remaining chapters⁸, which were written in Hebrew, contain prophetic visions, which were revealed only to the Prophet, and related principally to the church and people of God.

The style of Daniel is clear, concise, simple, and historical, though the visions which he describes were of themselves of a figurative and emblematical character. These pourtrayed future circumstances to his imagination under representations strikingly symbolical of those particulars which they foreshowed; and they who advert to the ensigns and armorial devices of the

⁵ These were originally the same language. Vid. 2 Kings xviii. 26. Ezra iv. 7. The language of Babylon was the pure Chaldee; the modern Syriac is the language which was used by the Christians of Comagena and other provinces bordering upon Syria, when that was the language of the country.

⁶ Esther ii. 23. vi. 1.

⁷ Chap. iv.

⁸ The first chapter, and the three first verses of the second chapter, were written in Hebrew, as they form a kind of introduction to the book.

nations of whom Daniel prophesied, will discover a very apposite propriety in the hieroglyphical images which the Prophet selects ⁹.

Daniel's name, like that of many others of the sacred writers, has been borrowed to countenance spurious books, besides the apocryphal additions in our Bibles. A work entitled the Visions of Daniel ¹, was condemned as counterfeit and impious by the decree of Gratian ². In this book Daniel is said to have foretold how many years each emperor should live, as well as the events of his reign, and the future circumstances of the Saracens. Some supposititious magical writings were likewise attributed to the Prophet ³. But Daniel, though well versed in the Chaldæan philosophy, as Moses was "learned in all the wisdom of Egypt," yet disclaimed all magical arts, and relied on the true God.

⁹ Chap. viii. Thus the Ram was the royal ensign of the Persians, and was to be seen on the pillars of Persepolis. Vid. Ammian. Marcel. lib. xix. Sir J. Chardin's Travels through Persia. The Goat also was the emblem or arms of Macedon. Vid. Justin. Hist. lib. viii. Mede's Works, book iii. p. 654. 712. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. cap. x. et xi. and Newton on Dan. ch. iv. par. 1.

¹ Ὀράσεις, Somnialia.

² Decret. Part ii. Causs. 27. Quæst. 1. c. xvi. and Athan. Synop. lib. ii.

³ Joan. Alb. Fabricii. Codic. Pseudepigraph. V. Test. p. 1130.

GENERAL PREFACE

TO THE

TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS.

THE writings of the Twelve Minor Prophets were, in the Hebrew canon, comprised in one book, which was called by St. Stephen the Book of the Prophets¹. By whom they were so compiled is uncertain; probably, however, they were collected together in that form by Ezra, or by some member of the Great Synagogue²; but certainly above 200 years before the birth of Christ; for the author of the Book of Ecclesiasticus, who wrote about A.M. 3770, celebrates the memorial of the Twelve Prophets under one general eulogy: as of those who had comforted God's people, and confirmed their confidence in God's promises of a Redeemer³. The order in which the books are placed, is not the same in the Septuagint as in the Hebrew⁴.

¹ Acts vii. 42. comp. with Amos v. 25.

² Abarb. Præf. in Isaiah. Bava Bathra, &c.

³ Eccus. xlix. 10. and Arnald on the place. Chandler's Defen. ch. 1. § 2. p. 44. It is mentioned as the Book of the Twelve Prophets, by Cyprian, Epist. 59. p. 129. edit. Oxon. 1682.

⁴ Hieron. Præfat. in Duodec. Prophet. tom. i. p. 727. Observat. Joseph. De Voisin in Procem. Pugionis Fidei, p. 118. edit. Lipsiæ, 1687.

According to the latter, they stand as in our translation; but in the Greek the series is altered, as to the six first, to the following arrangement: Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah. This change, however, is of no consequence, since neither in the original, nor in the Septuagint, are they placed with exact regard to the time in which their sacred authors respectively flourished.

The order in which they should stand, if chronologically arranged, is, by Blair and others, supposed to be as follows: Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Joel, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Obadiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. And this order will be found to be generally consistent with the periods to which the Prophets will be respectively assigned in the following work; except in the instance of Joel, who probably lived at an earlier time than that in which he is placed by these chronologers. The precise period of this Prophet, however, cannot be ascertained, and some disputes might be maintained concerning the priority of others also when they were nearly contemporaries, as Amos and Hosea; and when the first prophecies of a later Prophet were delivered at the same time with, or previously to some of those of a Prophet who was called earlier to the holy office⁵. The following scheme, however, in which also the greater Prophets will be introduced, may enable the reader more accurately to comprehend the actual and relative periods in which they severally prophesied.

⁵ Vid. *Observat. Jos. De Voisin in Proœm. Pugionis Fidei*, p. 118.

The PROPHETS, in their supposed Order of time, arranged according to Blair's Tables ⁶, with but little Variation.

	<i>Bef. Christ.</i>	<i>Kings of Judah.</i>	<i>Kings of Israel.</i>
Jonah,	Between 856 and 784.		Jehu and Jehoahaz, according to Lloyd ; but Joash and Jeroboam the Second, according to Blair.
Amos,	Between 810 and 785.	Uzziah, ch. i. 1.	Jeroboam the Second, ch. i. 1.
Hosea,	Between 810 and 725.	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, the third year of Hezekiah.	Jeroboam the Second, ch. i. 1.
Isaiah,	Between 810 and 698.	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, chap. i. 1. and perhaps Manasseh.	
Joel,	Between 810 and 660, or later.	Uzziah, or possibly Manasseh.	
Micah,	Between 758 and 699.	Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, ch. i. 1.	Pekah and Hosea.
Nahum,	Between 720 and 698.	Probably towards the close of Hezekiah's reign.	
Zephaniah,	Between 640 and 609.	In the reign of Josiah, ch. i. 1.	
Jeremiah,	Between 628 and 586.	In the thirteenth year of Josiah.	
Habakkuk,	Between 612 and 598.	Probably in the reign of Jehoiakim.	
Daniel,	Between 606 and 534.	During all the Captivity.	
Obadiah,	Between 588 and 583.	Between the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and the destruction of the Edomites by him.	
Ezekiel,	Between 595 and 536.	During part of the Captivity.	
Haggai,	About 520 to 518.	After the return from Babylon.	
Zechariah,	From 520 to 518, or longer.		
Malachi,	Between 436 and 397.		

⁶ See Bishop Newcome's version of Minor Prophets, Preface, p. 43.

The Twelve Minor Prophets were so called, not in respect to any supposed inferiority in their writings as to matter or style, but in reference to the brevity of their works. The shortness, indeed, of these prophecies seems to have been one reason for joining them together⁷; by which means the volume of their contents was swelled to a greatness in some degree correspondent to their importance. Neither were they later in point of time than the greater Prophets; some having preceded Isaiah; and many of them having lived before Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel⁸; and by the Greeks, indeed, they are placed before them. It is a traditionary account, that of these Prophets, such as do not furnish us with the date of their prophecies must be supposed to have flourished as contemporaries with, or immediately after the Prophets, which precede them in the order of the books; but this is not invariably true; and is built upon a precarious supposition, that the books are chronologically arranged in the Hebrew manuscripts.

Some of the Prophets were probably born in the territory of Israel, but most in that of Judah. They appear, however, to have been sometimes commissioned to preach reciprocally against those tribes among whom they were not born.

These twelve Prophets furnish us, in scattered parts, with a lively sketch of many particulars relative to the history of Judah and of Israel; as likewise of other

⁷ Beth Israel relates, that Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, added their writings to those of the Minor Prophets, and compiled them into one volume, lest they should perish. Vid. Bava Bathra, c. i.

⁸ Hieron. Præfat. in 12 Prophet. tom. i. p. 727-8. Theodor. in Procœm. Aug. de Civit. lib. xviii. c. xxvii.

kingdoms ; they describe in prophetic anticipation, but with historical exactness, the fate of Babylon, of Nineveh, of Tyre, of Sidon, and of Damascus. The three last prophets especially illustrated many circumstances at a period when the historical pages of Scripture were closed, and with respect to which profane authors afford very defective information. They foreshowed, under the most striking representations, the advent, and the character of the Messiah and of his kingdom, and endeavoured, by the most admirable instruction, to excite those religious sentiments which must have facilitated the reception of the Gospel. The Jewish Prophets of the most eminent rank at first flourished but as single guides, and followed each other in individual succession. During the continuance of the theocracy, and perhaps some time after, the Jews were in possession of the power of consulting God by means of the Urim and Thummim. But when the calamities of the captivity drew near ; during the continuance of that affliction, and amidst the melancholy scenes which the people contemplated on their return to desolate cities and to a wasted land ; in these dark periods the Prophets were, by God's mercies, raised up in greater numbers for the consolation of his people ; who were encouraged to look forward to that joyful deliverance by the Messiah which then approached. The light of inspiration was concentrated into one blaze previously to its suspension ; and it served to keep alive the expectations of the Jews during the awful interval which prevailed between the expiration of prophecy and its grand completion in the advent of Christ.

A period was left to demonstrate the general influence of the Law among the Jews, and the effects of

Philosophy cultivated under the highest advantages among the heathens. It is remarkable also that as the predictions which had been uttered, seem but in a few instances to have pointed to any events which occurred between the closing of the Jewish canon (which was concluded by Malachi with prophetic assurances of the speedy approach of the Baptist and our Saviour); so the intermediate period is but imperfectly described by Heathen and Jewish Historians. If in the writings of the later Minor Prophets, we sometimes are perplexed at seeing the light of revelation but faintly glimmering through the darkness of the period, and the obscurity of their style; we must recollect that some of them lived when the language of the Jews began to be vitiated and to decline; that there are few contemporary records to illustrate their prophecies: that the brevity of their works prevents us from collating the author with himself; and that we who read them in English, judge of them through the imperfect medium of a translation ⁹.

⁹ "Hebræi bibunt Fontes, Græci Rivos, Latini Paludes," as Picus Mirandula observed.

OF THE

BOOK OF THE PROPHET

HOSEA.

HOSEA has been supposed to have been the most ancient of the Twelve Minor Prophets; and, indeed, by some writers he is represented as having preceded all the prophets¹, since he flourished about the middle of the reign of Jeroboam the Second, the son of Joash King of Israel, and towards the commencement of that of Uzziah², who began to reign over Jerusalem about A.M. 3194. According to some accounts of no great

¹ Hieron. Comment in Osee, c. 1. Basil. Λόγος, 2d. in Esai. p. 812. edit. 1618. Rufin, &c. In the second verse of the first chapter it is said, "the beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea," which some have understood to imply, that when God began to manifest himself, he addressed Hosea; but it perhaps means only, that "the first revelation to (ב) Hosea was as follows."

² Chap. i. 1. Uzziah, or as he is sometimes called, Azariah, and Ozias, ascended the throne of Judah in the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam the Second, that is, according to some chronologists, in the twenty-seventh year of his reign, from the æra of his conjunction with his father; and in the sixteenth year of his monarchy, which commenced A.M. 3179. As Jeroboam reigned forty-one years, Hosea must have entered on his ministry before the twenty-fifth year of Uzziah's reign, if he prophesied while Uzziah and Jeroboam were contemporaries. Vid. Com. on 2 Kings xv. 1.

authority ³, he was of the tribe of Issachar, and of the city of Beleenor ⁴; others represent him to have been of the tribe of Judah. He was the son of Beerī ⁵, and entered on the prophetic office some time between the years 3194 and 3219. He continued to prophesy above sixty years: during the successive reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah; and probably to about the third year of the reign of the last: or if we reckon by the Kings of Israel, against which nation he chiefly prophesied, he may be described as having flourished during the reign of Jeroboam and his successors, to the sixth year of Hosea, which corresponds with the third year of Hezekiah. Hosea was, therefore, nearly contemporary with Isaiah, Amos, and Jonah. It is probable that he resided chiefly in Samaria; and that he was the first prophet, of those at least whose prophecies we possess, who predicted the destruction of that country; which was effected soon after the Prophet's death by Salmaneser, King of Assyria ⁶, about forty years after it was delivered.

Hosea apparently compiled his own prophecies, and

³ Pseudo Epiphanius. et Dorotheus. de Prophetis apud Eusebium. p. 619. edit. Basil.

⁴ Or Bethsome, not Beleemoth. Vid. Drusus. in Osee, c. i. 1.

⁵ Not Beerah, who was taken captive by Tiglath-Pileser. Vid. 1 Chron. v. 6. whose name is, indeed, spelt differently, and who was a prince of the Reubenites. The word Beerī implies a well; or, as some say, it is derived from a word which imports teaching: whence an argument in support of the Rabbinical fancy, that Hosea was the son of a Doctor, or Prophet. Hosea's name signifies the Saviour.

⁶ 2 Kings xviii. 10. Hieronimus. in Osee, cap. i. et Usseus ad A.M. 3197. See Jonathan Targum in Hoseam, c. 1. et Scholia, p. 3. edit. Paris, 1656.

he speaks of himself in the first person in this book⁷. Calmet, indeed, on account of some supposed chronological difficulties, questions the authenticity of the first verse, which he conceives to have been a subsequent addition; but these difficulties may be solved without having recourse to such conjectures. The book is cited by St. Matthew as unquestionably the inspired production of a Prophet⁸, as likewise by St. Paul⁹, and, indeed, by Christ himself¹.

The prophecies of Hosea being scattered through the book without date or connexion, cannot now be chronologically arranged with any certainty. They are, however, perhaps placed in the order in which they were at first uttered; and Wells, upon some probable conjectures, supposes them to have been delivered in the following succession, reckoning by the Kings of Israel.

In the reign of Jeroboam, The three first chapters.

In the Interregnum which
succeeded the death of
Jeroboam, } The fourth chapter.

In the reign of Menahem,
or in that of his son
Pekahiah. According to
which account none are
assigned to the short in-
termediate reigns of Ze-
chariah and Shallum, } The fifth chapter, to ch.
vi. 3. inclusively.

⁷ Chap. iii. 1, 2, 3.

⁸ Matt. ii. 15. from Hosea xi. 1. and Chand. Def. chap. xi. sect. i.

⁹ Rom. ix. 25, 26. 1 Cor. xv. 4. where the Apostle is supposed to refer to a remarkable passage in Hosea vi. 2. which is evidently prophetic of the resurrection of Christ.

¹ Matt. ix. 12, 13. xii. 7.

In the reign of Pekah,	{ From ch. vi. 4. to ch. vii. 10. inclusively.
In the reign of Hosea.	{ From ch. vii. 11. to the end. Comp. ch. vii. 11. with 2 Kings xvii. 4. Wells subdivides this portion into two parts, supposing the first which terminates with the tenth chapter, to have been delivered before the king of Assyria took away the golden calf that was at Bethel; and the remainder after that event.

At whatever periods the prophecies were delivered, the object and design of them are sufficiently clear. The author in one continued strain of invective, declaims against the sins of Israel; exposes in the strongest terms the spiritual whoredoms of those who worshipped vain idols erected at Bethel and Bethaven, calling on Judah to shun pollutions so offensive to Jehovah. He denounces God's vengeance against Ephraim, (the representative of the ten tribes,) who should vainly call on other nations for protection. He points out the folly of the people in their pursuits: telling them, that they had "sown the wind, and should reap the whirlwind." He threatens them in many prophecies, from among which we may select, as remarkable proofs of that foreknowledge with which the Prophet was inspired, those in which he foretold the

captivities, dispersion, and sufferings of Israel¹; the deliverance of Judah from Sennacherib, figurative of salvation by Christ²; the punishment of Judah, and the demolition of its cities³; the congregation of the Gentile converts⁴; the conversion of the Israelites⁵; the present destitute state of the Jews⁶; the union of the children of Judah and Israel under one head⁷; and their future restoration in the general establishment of the Messiah's kingdom⁸; the calling of our Saviour out of Egypt⁹; his resurrection on the third day¹⁰; and the terrors of the last judgment, alluded

¹ Ch. i. 4, 5. v. 5—7. ix. 3. 6—17. x. 5, 6. 15. xiii. 16.

² Ch. i. 7. comp. with 2 Kings xix. 35. and Chand. Def. ch. ii. § 1. p. 70.

³ Ch. v. 10. viii. 14.

⁴ Ch. i. 10, 11. ii. 23. com. with Rom. ix. 24. 26.

⁵ Ch. xiv. 4. 8.

⁶ Ch. iii. 4, 5. Jonathan, the author of the Chaldee Paraphrase, who was holden in the highest estimation by the Jews, and who, according to tradition, internal proofs, and the very design of his version, cannot be supposed to have made it less than twenty-eight years before the time of Christ, and who is related to have been a hearer of Simeon, and like him to have holden Christ in his arms, instead of rendering in the fifth verse of the third chapter, "David their King," uses the expression of "the Messiah, the Son of David;" as also in Jeremiah xxx. 9. See Targum seu Paraphrasis Caldaica quæ etiam Syriaca dicitur Jonathani Caldæi. . . . Dedicatio Principi Carolo Lotharingo. p. 1. Præfat. et Comment. in locos, edit. Paris, 1556. So that their own book bears witness against the Jews to the truth of the claims of our Lord. See Matt. xxi. 9. Vid. Hieron. in loc.

⁷ Ch. i. 11.

⁸ Ch. i. 11. iii. 5.

⁹ Ch. xi. 1. comp. with Matt. ii. 15. and Hieron. Grot. in loc.

¹⁰ Ch. vi. 2. comp. with 1 Cor. xv. 4. Cyprian. adv. Jud. lib. ii. cap. xxv. p. 295. Bernard. Serm. 1. in Die Sanct. Pasch. vol. i. p. 901. edit. Paris, 1719. Origen Homil. 5. in Exod. p. 144. Tertul. Advers. Jud. c. xiii. p. 199. Grotius, Mercerus, Pococke, &c.

to under figurative representations of temporal destruction impending over Samaria¹. Thus, amidst the denunciations of wrath, the people were animated by some dawnings of favour; and taught to cultivate righteousness and mercy in expectation of the blessings of the Lord², and in the assurances of a final ransom from the power of the grave, and of a redemption from death to be ultimately vanquished and destroyed³.

The style of Hosea has been considered as particularly obscure; it is sententious and abrupt, and characterised by a compressed and antiquated cast. The transitions of person are sudden; the connexive and adversative particles frequently omitted.

His figures and similitudes are rather lively than elegant, and are traced with more force than exactness⁴. His writings are animated with a fine spirit of indignation, descriptive of the zealous resentment which he felt against the princes and priests who countenanced the iniquities of the people: and his work may be considered as a noble exordium against those general offences which the Prophets who succeeded him more particularly detailed; as well as a diffusive revelation of those judgments which were afterwards more minutely described.

The subject of Hosea's marriage has been much agitated. Many Jewish and Christian writers conceive it to have been enjoined, and performed in a literal and historical sense⁵; some supposing that "a wife of

¹ Ch. x. 8. comp. with Luke xxiii. 30. and Rev. vi. 16. Hieron. in loc. and Lowth on Isaiah ii. 19.

² Ch. x. 12. Hieron. in loc.

³ Ch. xiii. 14. comp. with 1 Cor. xv. 55. and Pococke, in loc.

⁴ Lowth's *Prælect.* 21.

⁵ Hieron. et Theodoret in loc. August. Grotius, Calmet's

whoredoms" may imply a wife who should prove false⁶; or only a wife from among the Israelites, who were remarkable for their idolatrous fornications; as likewise by an adulteress⁷, whom the Prophet is represented afterwards to have bought, may be understood, a woman who had apostatized from God in a spiritual sense. Those who contend for the historical truth of these relations, maintain that all impropriety in such proceedings was done away by God's command; and that the immediate minister of God might, consistently with the design of his appointment, be employed thus to illustrate the scandalous conduct of the Israelites. Some writers, however, affirm that these accounts are descriptive of transactions in vision, as the expression of "the word of the Lord," that came to the Prophet, might seem to intimate⁸; and others consider the relations as fictitious representations imparted by way of parable⁹. Without presuming to determine on either side on a subject so difficult, it may be observed, that

Preface. Abarben. et Basil in loc. cap. viii. p. 983. Grot. et Wells in loc.

⁶ Wells, Diodati, &c.

⁷ It is uncertain, whether by the woman spoken of in the third chapter is meant Hosea's wife, whom he is commanded to take back after her infidelity, as predicted; or a different person appointed for the Prophet after the death of the first wife. Consult Pococke, and other commentators.

⁸ Aben-Ezra, R. David Kimchi, Maimon. More Nevoch. l. ii. c. xlii. Hieron. Præfat. in Osee, tom. iii. p. 1233-4. and General Preface, p. 327. n. ⁶.

⁹ Hieron. in loc. Aben-Ezra, Isidor. &c. The Chaldee Paraphrast has been thought to have considered the relation as a parable. He introduces the account thus: "The Lord said unto Hosea, Go, and utter a prophecy," &c. Vid. R. Tanch. Rivet, Junius Tremellius, Pococke, &c.

it was not inconsistent with the character of a vision or of a parabolical fiction, to specify minute particulars with narrative exactness¹. The names, therefore, of the personages introduced² in the accounts, cannot afford any explanation of the nature of the transactions; and whether real or fictitious, they might with equal consistency be represented as figurative.

¹ Ezek. xxiii. Luke xvi. 20—31.

² By "children of whoredoms," we are probably to understand legitimate children of a woman addicted to fornication: perverse, lewd, or idolatrous children, who should imitate the conduct of their mother.

OF THE
BOOK OF THE PROPHET
J O E L.

THE Book of Joel is placed in the Hebrew Bible immediately after that of Hosea; but in the Septuagint version the books of Amos and Micah are interposed between them. It is difficult to determine whether the Greek translators were authorized by chronology to change the order, since there is no positive criterion by which the age of Joel can be ascertained. St. Jerom, however, and many of the ancients¹, were of opinion, that as not any date is prefixed to the book, its author should be supposed, agreeably to the Jewish rule, to have flourished under the same reigns with those of the Prophet whose work with a defined æra immediately precedes, that is, Hosea. This rule is, however, not to be depended on; neither can any proof of the antiquity of Joel be drawn from the notion supported by Usher²; who conceived that the famine and drought of which

¹ Hieron. Præf. in Proph. Theodor. Proœm. in 12 Proph. p. 701. edit. Paris, 1642. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. p. 390. edit. Potter. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xxvii.

² Usser ad A. M. 3197. Lloyd's Tables.

Joel speaks as impending in his time, were parts of the same affliction which Amos represented as actually come to pass³; for Joel prophesied calamities against Judah; and Amos described punishments which were seemingly sustained, as peculiar judgments, only by the people of Israel. Still, however, there is no sufficient reason for departing from the Hebrew order⁴; nor is it necessary to suppose that Joel prophesied after the captivity of the ten tribes, merely because he makes no mention of Israel. His commission probably was confined to Judah, as that of Hosea, his supposed contemporary, was chiefly restricted to Samaria; and it might be argued rather, that if the Divine threats had been already accomplished against Israel, it is reasonable to suppose that the Prophet would, like his successors, have instructed the people to take warning by the fate of a sister kingdom⁵. We may, therefore, safely suppose him to have lived in the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah, and of Jeroboam, king of Israel⁶, who flourished as contemporary sovereigns between A.M. 3194 and 3219; and to have delivered his prophecies soon after Hosea had commenced his ministry; though some Jewish and Christian writers have chosen to assign to him a later

³ Amos iv. 7, 8.

⁴ Abarben. Præf. in 12 Proph.

⁵ Israel mentioned in ch. iii. 2. means not merely the ten tribes, but the whole nation of the Jews; and the Prophet speaks prophetically of a future dispersion among the nations from which God's people should be gathered.

⁶ Lloyd's Tables. A French writer, (P. Pezron *Essai d'un Commentaire sur les Prophetes*,) fixes the prophecy of Joel to the twentieth year of Uzziah, and the thirty-sixth of Jeroboam the Second. See also, Joel ii. 20. which contains a prediction, that seems, at least, in its secondary sense, to relate to the destruction of Sennacherib's army, which happened in the reign of Hezekiah, A.M. 3294.

period⁷; some placing him in the reign of Jotham⁸; others in that of Joram⁹; and a third class contending that he prophesied under Manasseth¹, or Josiah²; the last of which monarchs began to reign about 640 years before the birth of Christ.

Joel was the son of Pethuel, or Bethuel, and, according to some reports, of the tribe of Reuben³. He is related to have been born at Bethoron⁴; which was probably the lower or nether Bethoron, a town in the territory of Benjamin⁵, between Jerusalem and Cæsarea. Of the particulars of his life, or of the age to which he attained, we have not any account⁶. Doro-

⁷ Poli Synopsis. ⁸ August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xxvii.

⁹ The advocates for this period maintain, that Joel foreshowed the impending famine which desolated Judæa, seven years in the reign of Joram. Vid. 2 Kings viii. 1—3.

¹ Seder Olam Rabba, et Zuta, Kimchi, R. Selomo, R. David Ganz, Drusius, and Wells' Preface to Joel. Wells maintains, that the famine or dearth of which Micah prophesied, was to take place (and did happen) in the time of Manasseth. Vid. Wells's Preface to Micah, and in Micah vi. 14 note ^a.

² Calmet's Preface sur Joel. He conceives Joel to have been contemporary with Josiah, to whose reign he assigns the drought spoken of by Jeremiah, chap. xii. 4. xiv. But the last of these chapters, whether prophetic or descriptive, was composed probably in the reign of Jehoiakim, the successor of Josiah.

³ Epiphan. de Vit. Prophet.

⁴ Dorotheus writes Bethomeron. Huet proposes to read Betharan, a place in the territory of Gad, adjacent to the tribe of Reuben; or Bethnemra, in the district of Gad; or Bethabara; or Beelmeon, which was beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Reuben, Prop. iv.

⁵ Josh. xviii. 13, 14.

⁶ Jerom, though he supposes him to have been contemporary with Hosea, conceives that he survived (as well as Hosea, Amos, Obadiah, and Jonah) the captivity of the ten tribes.

theus relates only, that he died in peace at the place of his nativity.

The book has been regarded as recording events which had occurred; but it appears rather to be entirely prophetic, though Joel, under the impression of foreseen calamities, describes their effects as present; and by an animated representation, anticipates the scenes of misery which loured over Judæa⁷. Although it cannot be positively determined to what period the description contained in the first and second chapter may apply, it has been sometimes supposed that the Prophet blends two subjects of affliction in one general consideration, or beautiful allegory; and, that under the devastation to be effected by locusts in the vegetable world, he depicts some more distant calamities to be produced by the armies of the Chaldæans in their invasion of Judæa⁸. Hence a designed ambiguity in the expressions.

In the second chapter the Prophet proceeds to a more general denunciation of God's vengeance, which is delivered with such force and aggravation of circumstance as to be, in some measure, descriptive of that final judgment which every temporal dispensation of the Almighty must faintly prefigure. The severe declara-

⁷ Chap. i. 4—7—10. 16. 28. and Lowth's *Prælect.* 15.

⁸ Those who will consult Pliny, Bochart, and the naturalists and travellers in general, will find much cause to admire Joel's descriptive pictures of the destruction to be produced by locusts; and understand with what force and propriety the ravages of those all-devouring enemies are made figuratively to represent the devastation and havock of an invading army. Shaw's *Travels*, p. 257. edit. Oxford, 1738.

tions of Joel are intermingled with exhortations to repentance, and to the subsidiary means of promoting its effects, fasting and prayer; as likewise with promises of deliverance, and of a prosperity predictive of evangelical blessings. In treating of these he takes occasion to foretell, in the clearest terms, the general effusion of the Holy Spirit, which was to characterize the Gospel dispensations⁹, before the destruction of Jerusalem; concluding with a striking description of the fall of that city, which followed soon after, and punished the Jews for their obstinate rejection of the sacred influence; speaking in terms which as well as those of our Saviour that resembled them¹, had a double aspect, and referred to a primary and a final dispensation.

In the third chapter, Joel proceeds to foretell the future assemblage of all nations into the valley of Jehoshaphat², where the enemies of God will be cut off by some final excision³. The Prophet concludes with the assurance of some glorious state of prosperity to be enjoyed by the church, after the destruction of its enemies, when the Lord God should dwell in Zion, and a fountain should come forth out of the house of the Lord, to purify a polluted people by an effectual

⁹ Joel ii. 28—32. comp. with Acts ii. 1—21. and Acts ii. 38, 39. x. 44.

¹ Joel ii. 30, 31. comp. with Matt. xxiv. 29.

² The original expression means the valley of the Lord's judgment, from Jehovah, and Shaphat, to judge.

³ Chap. iii. 1—14. The precise application of this prophecy must be shown by the event. It is supposed to relate to those circumstances which are predicted in Ezekiel, ch. xxxix. 5—11. Rev. xx. 8, 9.

cleansing; and to diffuse spiritual blessings through barren wastes, poetically described under images of nature, and the consecrated emblems of revelation ⁴.

In consideration of these important prophecies, we need not wonder that the Jews should have looked up to Joel with particular reverence ⁵, or that he should be cited as a Prophet by the evangelical writers ⁶. The work, whether historical or prophetical, whether it relate to a plague by locusts, or to destruction by an invading army, or to both, affords a proof and example of the infliction of national judgments against national sins, and the necessity of repentance to avert them ⁷.

The style of Joel is equally perspicuous and elegant; obscure only towards the conclusion, where the beauties of his expression are somewhat shaded by allusion to circumstances yet unaccomplished. His descriptions are highly animated; the contexture of the prophecy in the first and second chapters is extremely curious; and the double destruction to be produced by locusts, and those enemies of which they were harbingers, is painted with the most expressive force, under terms that are reciprocally metaphorical, and admirably adapted to the twofold character of the description ⁸. The whole work is extremely poetical, and is pronounced by Dr. Gregory Sharp as one of the finest poems ever com-

⁴ Chap. iii. 16. 20, 21.

⁵ Joel is related to have received the Cabala, or traditionary explanation of the law from Micah.

⁶ See Pococke's Commentary.

⁷ Chap. ii. 32. comp. with Rom. x. 13. Acts ii. 16—21.

⁸ Lowth's Prel. 21. Chandler, &c.

posed⁹. Hermon Vonder Hardt¹, a learned German, conceiving that Joel's prophecies were composed in elegies, endeavoured, about the beginning of the seventeenth century, to reduce them to Iambic verse. They, undoubtedly, like the rest of the prophecies, have a metrical arrangement.

⁹ See 2d argument in defence of Christianity, p. 312.

¹ Wolfi Biblioth. Heb. pars 2. p. 169. and Lowth's Pref. to Isaiah.

OF THE
BOOK OF THE PROPHET
AMOS.

AMOS appears to have been contemporary with Hosea, but it is uncertain which was the first honoured by Divine revelations. They both began to prophesy during the time that Uzziah and Jeroboam the Second reigned over their respective kingdoms ; and Amos saw his first vision “two years before the earthquake¹ ;” which, as we learn from Zechariah², happened in the days of Uzziah. As there is no sufficient reason to suppose that this first verse was added by any writer subsequent to Amos, since he himself might have annexed the æra in which he beheld his vision, when he afterwards collected his prophecies, and committed them to writing, we must suppose this earthquake to have happened while Uzziah and Jeroboam were contemporaries, or at least within two years of that period. But little attention, therefore, is due to the account of Josephus : who represents the shock to have been felt on the occasion of Uzziah’s usurpation of

¹ Amos i. 1.

² Zechariah xiv. 5.

the priestly office, when the presumptuous king transgressed against God by offering incense to the Lord³; which daring impiety is by some placed in the twenty-fifth year⁴, and by some still more towards the conclusion of Uzziah's reign⁵; for, according to the most extended calculations, Jeroboam and Uzziah did not reign as contemporary sovereigns above twenty-five years. Amos, however, began to prophesy some time between A.M. 3194 and 3219. Some have confounded him with the father of Isaiah.

The Prophet Amos⁶ was a native of Tekoa, a small town in the territory of Judah, about four leagues southward from Jerusalem, and six southward from Bethlehem⁷; adjacent to a vast wilderness, where probably Amos might have exercised his profession of an herdsman. Some, indeed, think that he was not born at Tekoa, but that he only resided there when com-

³ 2 Chron. xxvi. 16—21.

⁴ Joseph. Antiq. lib. ix. cap. x. xi.

⁵ The sacrilegious attempt was probably made towards the conclusion of Uzziah's reign, as upon that occasion he was stricken with a leprosy that lasted unto the day of his death; and his son Jotham took upon him the government, who was not born till after Jeroboam's death. Vid. Usser. Annal. ad A.M. 3221.

⁶ Clemens Alex. Strom. lib. i. p. 389. edit. Potter. Epiphan. de Vit. Prophet, עמוס, Amos, or Hamos, signifies βαρδάζων, portans, laden, that is, perhaps, with the burden of prophecy, chap. vii. 10. If names were intentionally descriptive, they must have been providentially imposed, or assumed after the display of character.

⁷ Amos i. 1. 2 Chron. xi. 5, 6. Epiphanius places it in the lot of Zebulon; but Eusebius, Cyril, and St. Jerom, who lived near Tekoa, place it to the south of Jerusalem, in the territory of Judæa, about six miles from Bethlehem. Vid. Euseb. de locis Ebraicis. Cyrill. Alexandr. Præf. in Amos. Hieron. Procem. in Amos, et de locis Ebraicis.

manded by Amaziah to leave Bethel⁸. Amos, however, does not appear to have regarded the arrogant injunction of the Priest, but to have continued boldly to prophesy wherever the service of God required his presence.

Amos was by profession a herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit⁹. In the simplicity of former times, and in the happy climates of the East, these occupations were by no means considered in that degrading light in which they have been viewed since refinement has introduced a taste for the elegant arts of life, and established fastidious distinctions. He was no Prophet, as he informed Amaziah¹, neither was he a Prophet's son: that is, he had no regular education in the schools of the Prophets, but was called by an express irresistible commission from God², to prophesy unto his people Israel. The Holy Spirit did not disdain to speak by the voice of the most humble man; and selected its ministers as well from the tents of the shepherd, as from the palace of the sovereign³: respecting only the qualities and not the condition of its agents, as capable of inspiring knowledge and eloquence where they did not exist.

⁸ Chap. vii. 12.

⁹ Chap. vii. 14. The sycamore fruit was a species of wild fig, sometimes called the Egyptian fig or date, which is said to grow not among the leaves, but on shoots from the top. The Septuagint translators interpret the Hebrew words שְׁקָמִים וּבֹלֶס, *κνίζων τὰ συκάμυνα*, *opening the sycamine fruit*; as it was thought necessary to open the skin of this fruit that it might ripen. Vid. Plinii Hist. Natur. lib. xiii. cap. vii. Theophras. Dioscorid. lib. i. cap. cl. et Theodoret, in loc.

¹ Chap. vii. 14.

² Amos iii. 8. vii. 15.

³ 1 Cor. i. 27—29.

Amos, there can be little doubt, composed his prophecies in their present form. He speaks of himself as the author of them¹, and his prophetic character is established not only by the admission of his book into the sacred canon, and by the testimony of other writers², but by the exact accomplishment of many prophecies which he delivered.

The work consists of several distinct discourses; the particular period of their delivery cannot now be ascertained³. They chiefly respect the kingdom of Israel, though the Prophet sometimes inveighs against Judah, and threatens the kingdoms that bordered on the promised land⁴; the Syrians⁵; Philistines⁶; Tyrians⁷; Edomites⁸; Ammonites⁹; and Moabites¹⁰, for cruelties committed against the Israelites in which were fulfilled the predictions of former Prophets¹¹. He foretels in

¹ Chap. vii. 8. viii. 1, 2.

² Tobit ii. 6. Acts vii. 42, 43. xv. 15—17.

³ Some have supposed that the first of his prophecies is contained in the seventh chapter; and that the contents of the other chapters were afterwards delivered at Tekoa.

⁴ Vid. two first chapters. These prophecies were fulfilled by the victories of the Kings of Assyria and Babylon.

⁵ Ch. i. 3—5. comp. with 2 Kings xvi. 9.

⁶ Ch. i. 6, 7. comp. with 2 Kings xviii. 8. Jerem. xlvii. 1. Quint. Curt. lib. iv. 6. comp. also ch. i. 8. with 2 Chron. xxvi. 8. and Jerem. xlvii. 5.

⁷ Ch. i. 9, 10. comp. with Ezek. xxvi. 7—14. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. p. 1347. and Q. Curt. lib. iv. c. iii. et iv.

⁸ Ch. i. 11, 12. comp. with Jerem. xxv. 9, 21. and xxvii. 3—6. 1 Macc. v. 3. and Prid. Con. part ii. ad ann. A.C. 165. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. ix.

⁹ Ch. i. 13—15. comp. with Jerem. xxvii. 3, 6.

¹⁰ Ch. ii. 1—3. comp. Jerem. xxvii. 3—6.

¹¹ 2 Kings viii. 12. x. 32, 33. xiii. 3—7.

clear terms the captivities and the destruction of Israel, the woeful vanity of their desire of the day of the Lord, which should be as darkness and not light unto them¹. He foreshows that they should be carried for their idolatries to their god, Moloch and Chiun, into captivity beyond Damascus²; that their festivities should be turned into mourning, and their sanctuaries should be laid waste, and that God should cause the sun to go down at noon, and the earth to be darkened in the clear day³, manifesting fearful signs on earth, and in the heavens⁴. He concludes with assurances that the Almighty would not utterly destroy the house of Jacob; but that after sifting, as it were, and cleansing the house of Israel among the nations, God should again raise up the tabernacle, that is the kingdom of David; to be enlarged to more than its first splendour by the accession of Gentile subjects; and to be succeeded by the establishment of that government which the Prophet describes under poetical images as a blessed dispensation of security; abundance, and peace⁵.

The zeal with which the Prophet reproved the impenitence of the people, and the severe threats which

¹ Ch. v. 18.

² Ch. v. 27. comp. with Acts vii. 43.

³ Amos vi. and vii. 9. viii. 8, 9. See also Matt. xxvii. 45.

⁴ Ch. viii. 8, 9. Usher remarks, that about eleven years after the time at which Amos prophesied, there were two eclipses of the sun; one upon the feast of Tabernacles, and the other at the time of the Passover. The prophecy, therefore, in its first aspect, might allude to the ominous darkness, which, on these occasions, "turned their feasts into mourning." Vid. Usser. *Annal.* ad A. M. 3213. Hieron. Theod. and Grot. in loc.

⁵ Amos ix. 11—15. Acts xv. 17. Tobit xiii. 10, 11. Joel iii. 18. Chandler's *Def.* chap. ii. sect. 1. p. 168. and *Com.* in loc. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xxviii.

he pronounced against the oppression, effeminacy, and luxurious indolence that prevailed, exasperated so much the court of Jeroboam, which cultivated its idolatries at Bethel, that they drew upon him the resentment of the priests and princes of the people; and tradition relates, that he was⁶ ill treated and put to death by Uzziah, the son of Amaziah⁷, who was irritated by his prophecies and censures; but who soon after experienced the Divine vengeance in the calamities which Amos had predicted to his family and country.

Some writers who have adverted to the condition of Amos, have, with a minute affectation of criticism, pretended to discover a certain rudeness and vulgarity in his style; and even St. Jerom is of opinion, that he is deficient in magnificence and sublimity: applying to him the words which St. Paul speaks of himself⁸, “that he was rude in speech, though not in knowledge;” and his authority, says Bishop Lowth, has influenced many commentators to represent him as entirely rude and void of ornament; whereas it requires but little attention to be convinced that he “is not a whit behind the very chiefest” of the Prophets: equal to the greatest in loftiness of sentiment, and scarcely inferior to any in the splendour of his diction, and in the elegance of his composition. Locke has observed, that his comparisons are chiefly drawn from lions and other animals, because he lived among, and was conversant with such objects. But, indeed, the finest images and allusions which adorn

⁶ Cyrill. Præf. in Amos.

⁷ Epiphani. de Vit. Proph. c. xii. Isidor. de Vita et Morte S.S. c. xliii. Dorothei. Synop. cap. ii. Chron. Pascal. p. 119. edit. Venet. 1729.

⁸ Hieron. Com. in Amos. 2 Cor. xi. 6.

the poetical parts of Scripture in general, are drawn from scenes of nature, and from the grand objects that range in its walks; true genius ever delights in considering these as the real sources of beauty and magnificence⁹. Amos had the opportunities, and a mind inclined to contemplate the works of God, and his descriptions of the Almighty are particularly sublime. His whole book is animated with a very fine masculine eloquence.

⁹ Lowth's *Prael. Poet.* 21. p. 211. edit. Oxon. 1753.

OF THE
BOOK OF THE PROPHET
OBADIAH.

THIS Prophet has not transmitted to us any particulars of his own origin or life, any more than of the period in which he was favoured with Divine revelations. That he received a commission to prophesy is evident; as well from the admission of his work into the sacred canon, as from the completion of those predictions which he delivered. According to some traditionary accounts¹, he was of the tribe of Ephraim; and a native of Bathacamar², which Epiphanius describes as in the neighbourhood of Sichem; but which, according to Huet, was a town in the hilly part of the territory of Judah; and there probably he prophesied, though some suppose that he was carried captive to Babylon; and others that he died in Samaria³.

¹ Pseudo-Epiphani. Doroth. Isidor. &c.

² Or Bethacara, or Bethacaron. Huet proposes to read Bethacad, a town of Samaria: but Obadiah was probably of the tribe of Judah, and prophesied against the insulting enemies of his country.

³ St. Jerom speaks of his tomb at Sebaste, formerly at Samaria, and says, that St. Paul visited it, and performed miracles there; this

There is scarce an Obadiah mentioned in sacred history who has not been considered by different writers as the same person with the Prophet: the prince whom Jehoshaphat employed to teach in the cities of Judah⁴; the governor of Ahab's house, who rescued the hundred Prophets from the vengeance of Jezebel⁵; the captain of Ahaziah, who found favour with Elijah⁶; the overseer appointed by Josiah to inspect the reparation of the temple⁷; each has been separately represented as the Prophet, though not one of them is characterized in Scripture under that description; and all of them, except perhaps the last, lived long before the period at which Obadiah the Prophet must be supposed to have flourished. Equally unfounded are those conjectures by which it is imagined that he was the husband of the widow of Zarephath⁸, and a disciple of Elijah⁹; as well as that of the ancient Hebrew doctors, who conceived that he was an Idumæan, who, having become a proselyte to the Jewish religion, was

could not have contained the remains of Obadiah, for when Jerom lived, in the time of the emperor Julian, the Gentiles emptied the sepulchres, burnt the bones of the Prophets, and dispersed the ashes, after mixing them with those of beasts, about A. D. 362. Vid. Julian, Misopogon, and Baillet Vies des Saints du V. Test. 14 Juin. 19 Nov.

⁴ 2 Chron. xvii. 7. Sanct. Proleg. ii. n. 5.

⁵ 1 Kings xviii. 4. Hieron. in Abdian, et in Epitaph. c. vi. Paul. R. Selemoh. Jarchi, R. David Kimchi, and R. Aben-Ezra in Abd. 1. R. David Ganz, in Chron. Sixt. Senens. in Abd. et Mercer. Chron.

⁶ 2 Kings i. 13—15. Clemens Alex. Strom. 1. p. 387. Euseb. Chron.

⁷ 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12.

⁸ Lyan. in 4 Reg. c. iv. initio. The widow of Zarephath has also been represented as the mother of the Prophet Jonah.

⁹ Clemens Alex. Strom. i. p. 387. Euseb. Chron. et Aben-Ezra.

inspired to prophesy against the country of which he had forsaken the superstitions¹.

Huet, and other writers, in consideration of the place which Obadiah holds among the Prophets in the Hebrew canon, suppose him to have been contemporary with Hosea, Amos, and Joel. In conformity to which opinion, Huet also conceives that the Prophet delivered his threats against the Edomites², because they took possession of Elah after it had been conquered by Pekah and Rezin in the reign of Ahaz, and exercised great cruelties against the Jews³, conspiring with their enemies to harass and to cut them off when endeavouring to escape from the Assyrians⁴. All those writers who imagine that Obadiah foretold the calamities which the Edomites suffered from the invasion of Sennacherib, maintain that he lived in the reign of Ahaz or Hezekiah; but it is more probable that he flourished about

¹ R. Selemoth. Jarchi, et R. David Kimchi, in Abd. i. et R. Isr. Abarb. Præf. in Prophet. Minor. Cyrill. Præf. in Abd.

² The Edomites were the descendants of Esau; they possessed Arabia Petræa, all the country between the Red Sea and the Lake of Sodom, and some adjacent territory.

³ Huet. Demons. Evan. in Abd. Cyrill. Præf. in Abd. Grotius. and Lightfoot's Harmon. of the Old Test. In our translation of 2 Kings xvi. 6. no mention is made of the Edomites, but in the Vulgate it is rendered, "the Edomites came to Elah." The word אֲדָמִים much resembles that of אֲרָמִים, and Calmet thinks that it should be written Edom instead of Syria, throughout the verse, as the Edomites had previously possession of Elah, but it does not appear that the Syrians had been masters of it, for whom it could not, therefore, be recovered. Still, however, the Chaldæan, Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic versions, as well as Josephus, suppose that Rezin took Elah for the Syrians, and established them there. Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. ix. cap. xii. p. 423. Grotius, &c.

⁴ Ver 11. and 14.

the same time with Ezekiel and Jeremiah; and the best opinions concur in supposing him to have prophesied a little after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, which happened about A.M. 3416. He predicted, therefore, the same circumstances which those Prophets had foretold against the Edomites⁵, who had, upon many occasions, favoured the enemies of Judah⁶; and who, when strangers carried their forces into captivity, and when they cast lots upon Jerusalem, had rejoiced at the destruction, and insulted the children of Judah in their affliction⁷.

The Prophet, after describing the pride and cruelty of the Edomites, declares that though they dwelt in fancied security among the clefts of the rocks⁸, yet that the “mighty men of Teman⁹ should be dismayed,” and “every one of the Mount of Esau should be cut off by slaughter;” intimating that those who had confederated with them against Jacob¹, and had been considered by them as their allies, should contribute to

⁵ Comp. Obad. ver. 3, 4. with Jerem. xlix. 16. Obad. ver. 5. with Jerem. xlix. 9. Obad. ver. 8. with Jer. xlix. 7. Obad. ver. 16. with Jer. xxv. 15—21. and xlix. 7—12. Vid. Ezek. xxv. 12. 14. and chap. xxxv.

⁶ 2 Chron. xxviii. 17. Joel iii. 19.

⁷ Ver. 11—14. Psalm cxxxvii. 7.

⁸ The south part of Palestine, from Eleutheropolis to Petra, (the ancient capital of Idumæa) and Elah, was full of rocks, among which the natives dwelt. Vid. Hieron. in loc.

⁹ Teman, a city, or, as some say, a province of Idumæa, so called from Teman, grandson of Esau. Vid. Jerem. xlix. 7. Amos i. 12. Vid. Hieron. et Euseb. in loc. Ebraicis.

¹ Obadiah uses the expression, “thy brother Jacob,” in reproachful allusion to Esau’s hatred against Jacob. Vid. Gen. xxvii. 41. a primary source of God’s displeasure against the Edomites.

inflict the punishment of their malevolence. The Prophet concludes with consolatory assurances of future restoration and prosperity to the Israelites and to the Jews, to whom should arise deliverance from Zion: Saviours who should judge the nations; and a spiritual kingdom, appropriated and consecrated to the Lord. These prophecies began to be completed when Nebuchadnezzar ravaged Idumæa², and dispossessed the Edomites of much of Arabia-Petræa, which they never afterwards recovered. But they were still farther fulfilled in the conquests of the Maccabees over the remainder of the Edomites³; and they received the final accomplishment in the advent of that Redeemer, whom preceding Saviours had prefigured.

Obadiah's name implies, the servant of Jehovah, a title equivalent to that by which Moses was distinguished⁴, and to that in which St. Paul gloried. The Prophet's work is short, but composed with much beauty; it unfolds a very interesting scene of prophecy, and an instructive lesson against vain confidence and malicious exultation.

² Usser. ad A. M. 3419. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. ix.

³ 1 Macc. v. 3. 65.

⁴ Numb. xii. 7.

OF THE

BOOK OF THE PROPHET

JONAH.

THOUGH Jonah is placed fifth in the order of the Minor Prophets, both in the Hebrew and in the Septuagint copies, he is generally considered as the most ancient of all the Prophets, not excepting Hosea. Jonah was the son of Amittai, of the tribe of Zabulon; and was born at Gath-hepher¹, which is supposed to have been the same place with Jotapeta; a town remarkable for having sustained, under the conduct of Josephus, a siege against the Roman army. It was situated in the land of Zabulon, near Siphorim², towards Tiberias, where was the district of Ophir, or Hopher. St. Jerom

¹ Vid. 2 Kings xiv. 25. The same place probably with Gittah Hopher. Vid. Josh. xix. 13. Dorotheus erroneously affirms, that he was born at Carjathmaus, or Carjathjarim, in the tribe of Judah; and buried at Saar, (Tyre in Phœnicia,) and St. Jerom has taken the trouble to refute some who maintained that Jonah was born at another Geth, near Lyddæ, or Diospolis, confounding Geth with Gath-hepher, and Diospolis with Diocæsarea.

² Now called Diocæsarea. Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. iii. c. vi. p. 1141. Vid. Hieron. Proœm. Com. in Jonam.

informs us, that the Prophet's sepulchre was shown there in his time; and there the natives still believe it to exist³. Since this place (as indeed all the land of Zabulon) was in Galilee⁴, it may be produced in confutation of the illiberal assertion of the Pharisees, that "out of Galilee ariseth no Prophet⁵." The Orientals now show his tomb at Mosul⁶, which they suppose to be the site where Nineveh stood; and the Turks have built a mosque there, in which they pretend to possess his relics: while others, who reside at Gath-hepher, now a little *bourgade*, show a mausoleum of Jonah in a subterraneous chapel, inclosed in a mosque, and compel travellers to enter it barefoot. Such are the contests of superstitious reverence, or the pretensions of mercenary rivalry.

Some Jewish writers report upon a very groundless fancy, that Jonah was the son of the widow of Zarephath, whom Elijah raised from the dead⁷; but Jonah

³ Benjam. Tudel. Itiner. et Brocardus Argentoratensis Descrip. Terræ Sanctæ.

⁴ Isaiah ix. 1. Matt. iv. 13.

⁵ John vii. 52. Nahum was a Galilean by birth, though of the tribe of Simeon; and Malachi, as some say.

⁶ Thevenot's Travels, part ii. book i. ch. xi. p. 50. Mosul, now the seat of the Patriarch of the Nestorians, is on the western side of the Tigris; and is by some asserted to have been a suburb of Nineveh, which is said to have been on the eastern side, though Pliny maintains it to have been situated on the western side. Vid. Plinii lib. vi. cap. 13. p. 311. edit. Harduin. 1723. Benjamin Tudela, Itiner. Marsham Chron. Sæc. xviii. p. 598.

⁷ Hieron. et Isidor. et Quæst. ad Antioch. in Append. ad Oper. S. Athan. Qu. lxxv. tom. ii. p. 354. edit. Paris, 1627. Jonah was the son of Amittai, which word implies Truth in the Hebrew, and the widow had said to Elijah, "The word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth." Vid. 1 Kings xvii. 24. Hence the Rabbinical conceit.

represents himself as an Hebrew, and Zarephath was a city of Sidon⁸. He is generally supposed to have prophesied in the reigns of Joash and Jeroboam the Second, Kings of Israel; the former of whom began to reign, A.M. 3163, the latter died A.M. 3220. In the second book of Kings⁹, Jonah is said to have prophesied concerning Jeroboam, that he should “restore the coast of Israel;” which prophecy, now not extant, was perhaps delivered in the reign of Jehoahaz, the grandfather of Jeroboam, when the kingdom of Israel was greatly oppressed by the Syrians¹; and, therefore, it is probable that Bishop Lloyd does not place him much too high in supposing that he prophesied towards the latter end of Jehu’s reign; or in the beginning of that of Jehoahaz, when Hazael, by his cruel treatment of Israel, was verifying the predictions of Elisha². So that though Jonah might be contemporary with Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah, he appears to have uttered the prophecy alluded to, before any were delivered of those now existing in the writings of the Prophets; and the prophecy concerning Nineveh, of which the publication is related in this book, must, contrary to the opinion of many writers³, have been delivered long before the time that Obadiah prophesied.

Others make him the son of the woman of Shunem, a place in the tribe of Issachar. Vid. 2 Kings iv. 16. Some maintain that he was the Prophet who was sent to anoint Jehu King over Israel. Vid. 2 Kings ix. 1, 2. R. David Kimchi, &c.

⁸ Comp. Luke iv. 26. with Jonah i. 9. ⁹ 2 Kings xiv. 25.

¹ Comp. 2 Kings xiii. 3—7. with 2 Kings xiv. 26. et Joseph.

² 2 Kings viii. 12. x. 32. xiii. 3—9.

³ Clem. Alex. Strom. p. 390. Euseb. Præp. lib. x. c. xiv. p. 503. Cyrill. Præf. in Jon. p. 364. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xxvii. Theod. Procem. in 12 Proph. p. 699. edit. Paris, 1642.

This book, which is chiefly narrative, presents us with an account of the mandate that Jonah, who was more especially a prophet to the Gentiles, received to preach against Nineveh, the metropolis of that mighty kingdom of Assyria, which was employed by God as the “rod of his anger against Israel and Judah ⁴.” It relates that Jonah, who was of a timid character ⁵, aware of the pride and false confidence of a city, equally distinguished for its magnificence and corruption, for its careless merriment, and licentious dissipation ⁶, and conscious that the Lord was “slow to anger,” and loth to execute his threats, was afraid to carry the message of wrath. He knew that the Prophets were exposed to insult from such as confidently maintained that the day of the Lord would not arrive; and who challenged God to hasten his word ⁷. He resolved, therefore, “to flee from the presence of the Lord,” that is, possibly, as some have interpreted the expression, to flee from that impulse which wrought as he might think only in the land of Israel; and thus avoid the Divine appointment; but in this foolish attempt in his flight to Tarshish ⁸, which he records with a very ingenuous and

⁴ Isaiah x. 5.

⁵ Jonah, or Jonas, as it is written in the Greek, signifies a dove, a name probably descriptive of his character and disposition.

⁶ By Zephaniah it is called the rejoicing city, *Κρείσσων Νινουῦ εὐφραιούσης* (better than joyous Nineveh) was a proverbial comparison. Nineveh was much greater than Babylon. Vid. Strabo, lib. xvi. p. 1470. edit. Oxon. 1807. Diodor. Siculus, lib. ii. cap. iii. p. 113. edit. Wesseling, 1745.

⁷ Amos v. 18. Isa. v. 19. Jerem. xvii. 15.

⁸ Drusius Animad. lib. i. c. 57. The Tarshish here mentioned was probably the same place with Tarsis, or Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, where St. Paul was born; and Jonah might be cast on shore

repentant fidelity, he was arrested and punished by a miracle; and when delivered from the jaws of destruction, he was compelled to utter the doleful message, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh" (if it continue impenitent) "shall be overthrown." The king, who, according to Usher, was Pul, or possibly a predecessor of that monarch, alarmed at the prophetic threat conveyed to him under such miraculous circumstances, proclaimed a solemn fast and supplication for pardon⁹; and as God's denunciations are conditional, and his anger ever softened by repentance, he suspended the sentence which he had pronounced, till about 160 years after, when the wickedness of the people provoked its execution. The last chapter represents the unreasonable displeasure of Jonah at God's mercy, unmindful of the deliverance which he himself had so recently experienced, and his mortification at having been employed to deliver a prediction which was not to be accomplished; more solicitous for his own reputation than for the glory of God, or for the security of a kingdom. The Almighty is described as condescending gently to reprove the Prophet; and to vindicate his own conduct by a miraculous illustration, and by an appeal to the compassion of the Prophet, which Jonah records with a tacit admission of the equity and goodness of God.

It must be remarked, that the miracle by which

somewhere on the coast of Cilicia. There were likewise places of the name of Tarshish in India and in Spain. Vid. 2 Chron. xx. 36. Bochart, *Geog. Sac. lib. iv. c. xx. p. 281.* edit. Cadomi. 1646. Stephanus de Urbibus, and Wells's *Geograph. of New Test. part ii. p. 36.*

⁹ Usser. *Annal. A.M. 3233.* Lloyd's *Tables.* Newton on the *Prophecies, Diss. ix. vol. i. p. 256.*

God punished the unbecoming flight of Jonah, was, agreeably to the figurative arrangements of the Old Testament, rendered symbolical of an event that was to occur under the New. The Prophet, in this instance a sign of Christ¹, was swallowed up by a great fish², as our Saviour was admitted into the jaws of death; and for a similar continuance of time, since both were detained three days and three nights³, and neither of them was suffered to see corruption⁴. The objections which have been made to this miracle are certainly unworthy of attention⁵, since considerations of what may, or may not be probable, are clearly not applicable

¹ Matt. xii. 39, 40. xvi. 4. Luke xi. 29, 30. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xxx.

² The fish is generally supposed to have been a whale. The word used by the Evangelist, (Matt. xii. 40.) *καῖτος*, *Cetus*, means any large fish, as does the Hebrew in Jonah, דג גדול, *Daga Gadol*. Some suppose it to have been the *Canis Charcarias*, the *lamia*, or sea-dog. The Rabbins talk of a fish created on purpose from the beginning of the world; and many other absurd notions have been entertained on the subject. Vid. Scaliger cont. Cardan. Bochart. Hieroz. p. 2. lib. v. c. xii. p. 742. edit. Lond. 1663. Dionys. Periegesis, v. 603. ch. i. 17. Calmet's Dissert.

³ As the Hebrew language has not any word which defines a natural day, the Jews describe what the Greeks call *νυχθήμερον*, by a night and a day. The space of time, therefore, which consists of one whole revolution of twenty-four hours, and part of two other days, is properly expressed in Hebrew by three days and three nights; the length of time during which Jonah and Christ were respectively sepulchred in the fish and in the grave. Vid. Lowth in ch. i. 17. Hosea vi. 2.

⁴ Ch. ii. 6. comp. with Psalm xvi. 10. and Acts ii. 31.

⁵ Herman Von-der Hardt absurdly undertook to turn the whole book into a kind of prophetic scheme or parable, though there is not a shadow of reason to suppose it any other than a literal narration of actual events. Vid. Carpzov. Introd. ad lib. V. T. par. iii. p. 349.

to works which exceed the measure of human power, and deviate from the course of human events, and which, indeed, are described as unprecedented. The miraculous preservation and deliverance of Jonah was surely not more remarkable or descriptive of Almighty power, than were the multiplied wonders in the wilderness⁶, the protection of Daniel, or the resurrection of the son of the widow of Zarephath; all of which were positive violations of the general rules of nature.

Among other testimonies given to the prophetic character of Jonah, may be reckoned that of Tobit, who professed a firm confidence in the accomplishment of Jonah's prediction against Nineveh⁷, and whose son, indeed, afterwards lived to witness its completion. The sacred writers, likewise, and our Lord himself⁸, speak of him as a Prophet of considerable eminence.

As the word with which this book begins is frequently used as a connexive particle, some writers have conceived that these prophecies are but compendious extracts from a larger collection; but the book appears, in its present state, to be an entire and perfect work; and the particle with which it begins is only a common introductory letter, which converts the future into the perfect or past tense. True it is, that Jonah, as probably all the Prophets, delivered some prophecies, which are no longer extant; as appears from the pas-

⁶ "Quod aut omnia divina miracula credenda non sint, aut hoc cur non credatur causa nulla sit." Vid. August. epist. cii. in Quæst. 6. de Jona, n. 30. tom. p. 284.

⁷ Tobit xiv. 4—6. 15.

⁸ 2 Kings xiv. 25. Matt. xii. 39. 41. xvi. 4. Luke xi. 29. Vid. also, 2 Esdras i. 39. and Clement. Epist. i. ad Corinth. c. vii. p. 33. edit. Wotton.

sage in the Second Book of Kings, before alluded to⁹; and these, as intended by their speedy completion only to excite the confidence of contemporaries, were probably not committed to writing: such chiefly being composed for the canon as were designed for the permanent instruction of the church. There is not, however, any sufficient evidence to prove the authenticity of some other predictions ascribed to Jonah by Dorotheus and others¹: as that “when they should see a stone” (i.e. Christ, the corner-stone) “bitterly lamenting, and all the nations in Jerusalem, then should the city be entirely destroyed;” which pretended prophecy is supposed to have alluded to our Saviour’s weeping over Jerusalem², and to the assemblage of the Gentiles, which preceded the destruction of the holy city.

The style of Jonah is narrative and simple; and the beautiful prayer contained in the second chapter has been justly admired. The book presents us with a fine description of the power and mercies of God. The record of the repentance of Nineveh, at the preaching of one Prophet, was calculated to afford strong reproof to the Jews, and our Saviour declares that the men of Nineveh should rise up in judgment at the last day, against the generation which he addressed³.

The fame of Jonah’s deliverance appears to have spread among the heathen nations; Mahomet, in more than one instance, alludes to the mission and miraculous circumstances of the history of Jonah⁴; and the Greeks,

⁹ 2 Kings xiv. 25.

¹ Epiphan. Dorothe. et Chron. Pascal.

² Luke xix. 41.

³ Ch. iii. 5. Matt. xii. 41. Luke xi. 32.

⁴ Sale’s Koran, ch. x. p. 174. ch. xxi. p. 272. ch. xxxvii. p. 370.

who were accustomed to adorn the memory of their heroes by every remarkable event and embellishment which they could appropriate, added to the fictitious adventures of Hercules, that of having continued three days without injury in the belly of a dog sent against him by Neptune ⁵. The fable of Arion and the Dolphin, of which the date is fixed at a time nearly coeval with the period of Jonah, is possibly a representation of particulars recorded in this sacred book.

ch. lxviii. p. 462. edit. London, 1734. and Hottinger *Histor. Oriental*, lib. i. c. iii. p. 76, 77.

⁵ Lycophron et Isaacus Tzetzes, Cyrill. et Theophylact. in *Jon. Sext. Emp. adv. Gram.* lib. i. cap. xii. Phavorinus in *τρίεσπερος*, et Gazæus in *Dialog. de Immort. Anim. Biblioth. Patrum*, tom. ii. p. 394.

OF THE
BOOK OF THE PROPHET
MICAH.

MICAH was unquestionably the author of this book, and he speaks in that character¹. In the Hebrew manuscripts he is placed the sixth, and in the Septuagint copies the third, in order of the Twelve Prophets. He calls himself a Morasthite², and is supposed to have been a native of Morasthi, a village situated near the city of Eleutheropolis, in the southern part of Judah; a place distinguished by St. Jerom³ from Mareshah, mentioned in this book⁴, and in Joshua⁵.

Micah speaks only of the kings of Judah; and he prophesied in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, contemporary with whom were Pekah and Hosea,

¹ Ch. iii. 1. 8.

² Ch. i. 1. Jerem. xxvi. 18.

³ Hieron. Prol. in Micah. Epitaph. Paul. c. vi. et de Locis Ebraicis. Drusius erroneously imagines that Morasthi might be the same place with Moresheth-gath, mentioned in Micah, ch. i. 14.

⁴ Ch. i. 15.

⁵ Josh. xv. 44. St. Jerom, however, places this town likewise in the territory of Judah, and says, that the ruins of it were extant in his time. Josephus represented it to have been in Idumæa. Vid. Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. i. c. ii. p. 962. edit. Hudson. 2 Chron. xi. 8. xiv. 10.

the two last kings of Israel. Micah then began to prophecy soon after Isaiah, Hosea, Joel, and Amos; and he prophesied between A.M. 3246, when Jotham began to reign, and A.M. 3305, when Hezekiah died; but probably not during the whole of that period. It is related by Epiphanius⁶, and the Greek writers who copied him, that Micah was thrown from a precipice and killed by Joram, son of Ahab, whom he erroneously calls king of Judah, but who really was king of Israel; and whose *grandson* Jehoram lived at least 130 years before Micah. But these writers⁷ seem to have confounded Micah with Micaiah, the son of Imlah, who flourished in Israel, and prophesied evil of Ahab⁸; and Micah does not appear to have suffered martyrdom, as may be collected from a passage in Jeremiah⁹; but probably died in peace under the reign of the good king Hezekiah. St. Jerom says, that his tomb was at Morasthi, and converted into a church in his time¹. And Sozomen², adopting a popular superstition, professes to have heard, that his body was shown, in a Divine vision, to Zebennus, bishop of Eleutheropolis, in the reign of Theodosius the Great, near a place called Berathsatia, which probably might be a corruption of Morasthi, since Sozomen describes it to have been at nearly the same distance from Jerusalem as that at which St. Jerom places Morasthi³.

⁶ Epiphanius erroneously calls him a Morasthite of the tribe of Ephraim; and says, that he was buried at Marathi.

⁷ Athan. in Synop. Euseb. Chron.

⁸ 1 Kings xxii. 8—28.

⁹ Jerem. xxvi. 18, 19.

¹ Hieron. Epist. xxvii. seu Epitaph. Paul. c. vi.

² Sozom. Hist. Eccles. lib. vii. c. xxix. p. 76. edit. Antverp. 1578.

³ About ten stadia, which answers nearly to the two miles of St. Jerom. Some place Micah's tomb on the declivity of Mount Olivet.

Micah, who received the Divine revelations by vision⁴, was appointed to preach against both Israel and Judah; and executed his commission with great animation and zeal. One of his predictions is related⁵ to have saved the life of Jeremiah; who, under the reign of Jehoiakim, would have been put to death for prophesying the destruction of the temple, had it not appeared that Micah had foretold the same thing under Hezekiah, above 100 years before⁶. Micah, indeed, is mentioned as a prophet in the Book of Jeremiah, as having foretold this event, and likewise "that Jerusalem should become heaps⁷;" he is appealed to, also, as a prophet in the New Testament⁸. He is likewise imitated by succeeding prophets⁹, as he himself had borrowed the expressions of those who preceded, or lived at the same time with himself¹. Our Saviour, indeed, condescended to speak in the language of the prophet².

Dr. Wells³ supposes Micah's prophecies to have been uttered in the order in which they are here written. He maintains that the contents of the first chapter were delivered in the time of Jotham and Pekah; and that

⁴ "The word of the Lord came to him." Vid. Maimon. More Nevoch. pars ii. c. 41.

⁵ Jerem. xxvi. 18—24.

⁶ Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. vi. p. 443. Micah iii. 12.

⁷ Jerem. xxvi. 18. comp. with Micah iii. 12.

⁸ Matt. ii. 5. and John vii. 42.

⁹ Compare Zephaniah iii. 19. with Micah iv. 7. And Ezek. xxii. 27. with Micah iii. 11.

¹ Compare Micah iv. 1—3. and Isaiah ii. 2—4. Micah iv. 13. with Isaiah xli. 15. Micah began to prophesy rather later than Isaiah.

² Comp. Micah vii. 6. with Matt. x. 35, 36.

³ Preface to Micah.

it consists of general invective against the sins and idolatry of Israel and Judah, to be punished by impending judgments. What is comprised between the first verse of the second chapter and the eighth verse of the fourth he assigns to the reign of Ahaz, and his contemporaries Pekah and Hosea; and the twelfth verse of the third chapter, which is attributed by Jeremiah to the reign of Hezekiah¹, Wells conceives to have been spoken in the year when Hezekiah was partner in the kingdom with Ahaz, in the last year of the reign of the latter; and the remainder of the book the learned commentator assigns to the reign of Hezekiah. But at whatever period these prophecies were delivered, they contain many remarkable particulars. The prophet predicted, in clear terms, the invasion of Shalmanezzer² and that of Sennacherib³, and their triumphs over Israel and Judah; the captivities, dispersion⁴, and deliverance⁵ of Israel; the cessation of prophecy⁶; the destruction of Assyria, the representative of the enemies of the Christian church⁷; the birth of a ruler at Bethlehem Ephratah, “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting⁸,” yet who should be smitten⁹; the establishment and exaltation of Christ’s kingdom over all nations¹⁰; the promulgation

¹ Jerem. xxvi. 18, 19.

² Chap. i. 6—8. and 2 Kings xvii. 4. 6.

³ Chap. i. 9—16. 2 Kings xviii. 13.

⁴ Ch. v. 7, 8.

⁵ Ch. ii. 12. iv. 10. v. 8.

⁶ Ch. iii. 6, 7.

⁷ Chap. vii. 8. 10. Mede’s Discourses.

⁸ Micah v. 2. comp. with Matt. ii. 6. and John vii. 42.

⁹ Chap. v. 1. comp. with Lament. iii. 30. Zech. xiii. 7. and Matt. xxvi. 31.

¹⁰ Chap. iv. 1. 2. 7. and Luke i. 33. See also v. 5. comp. with Ephes. ii. 14. vii. 20. with Luke i. 73.

of the Gospel from Mount Zion, with its beneficial effects¹; and the utter destruction of Jerusalem².

The force and beauty of Micah's style have been much admired. Bishop Lowth has characterized it as compressed, short, nervous, and sharp. It is often elevated, and very poetical, though occasionally obscure from sudden transition of subject.

Micah, after pointing out the insufficiency of sacrifices, of "thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil," and after intimating, with reference to a greater atonement, that if he were "to give his first-born for his transgression, and the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul," it would be of no avail; observes that God hath showed what is good for man, and that the Lord requireth of him "to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God³;" and he concludes his book with a fine prophetic assurance of God's mercies, who should cast away the sins of his people, and perform the promises which he had sworn unto Abraham.

¹ Chap. iv. 1—8. comp. with Isaiah ii. 2—4.

² Chap. iii. 12. This prophecy was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by Vespasian, when, according to Christ's prediction, not one stone was left upon another. Vid. Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib. vi. c. ix. p. 1290. et lib. vii. c. i.

³ Chap. vi. 8.

OF THE
BOOK OF THE PROPHET
NAHUM.

NAHUM describes himself as an Elkoshite: which some have considered as a patronymic expression, conceiving it to imply his being a descendant of Elkosha; but which is generally supposed to intimate that he was born at Elkosh, or Elkosha, a small village in Galilee, of which St. Jerom professes to have seen the ruins¹. Nahum is said to have been of the tribe of Simeon²; but amidst a variety of opinions, it is difficult to determine what precise time should be assigned for the period of his existence. Josephus³ asserts, that he lived in the time of Jotham, king of Judah: in which case he may be supposed to have prophesied against Nineveh, when Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, carried

¹ Epiphanius and Dorotheus place it near Begabar or Bethabara, where St. John baptized his disciples. But St. Jerom represents it as at a great distance from that town. He says that it was called Helkesai. It is not mentioned in Scripture, or by Josephus.

² He was probably in Judah when he received Divine revelations. Bethabara was far from the territory of Simeon.

³ Joseph. Antiq. lib. ix. cap. xi. p. 422. edit. Hudson. Josephus says, also, that Nahum's predictions concerning Nineveh came to pass

away captive the natives of Galilee, and of other parts ⁴; about A.M. 3264. The Jews place him so late as the reign of Manasseth ⁵. The most probable opinion is, that though Nahum might have lived in the reigns of both these kings, yet that he delivered these prophecies in Judæa in the reign of Hezekiah ⁶; for he appears to speak of the taking of No-Ammon, a city of Egypt ⁷, and of the insolent messengers of Sennacherib ⁸, as of things past; he likewise describes the people of Judah as still in their own country, and desirous of celebrating their festivals. He cannot, therefore, be supposed to have prophesied before the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, since the expedition of Sennacherib against this prince was in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign; and, therefore, he probably prophesied between A.M. 3283, when Shalmaneser carried Israel captive into Assyria ⁹; and A.M. 3294, when Sennacherib was meditating the destruction of Jerusalem.

At this period of perplexity and distress, when the

in 115 years after; in which case the prophet must have delivered them in the reign of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, when Shalmaneser invaded Samaria, and rendered it tributary.

⁴ 2 Kings xv. 29.

⁵ Seder Olam, Grot. Sixt. Senens, &c. Clemens Alexandrinus places Nahum between Daniel and Ezekiel, and supposes him to have flourished during the captivity. Vid. Strom. i. p. 392.

⁶ Hieron. Theodor. Argum. et Theophyl. Proœm. in Nahum.

⁷ Chap. iii. 8. This city is called, also, Diospolis, and was the same place that was styled Thebes by Homer. It was probably first taken by Sennacherib, in his expedition to Egypt, before he marched to Jerusalem. Vid. Calmet in loc. Prid. Con. an. 713. It was afterwards destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

⁸ Ch. ii. 13. comp. with 2 Kings xviii. 17. et seq.

⁹ 2 Kings xvii. 6. Nahum ii. 2.

fate of Samaria was present to the apprehensions of Judah; when her own cities had been taken by Sennacherib, and Hezekiah had drained his treasury, and even despoiled the temple in the vain hope of averting the fury of Sennacherib¹; then was Nahum raised up in consolation² to Judah, and to proclaim destruction “to him that imagined evil against the Lord³.” At this time Sennacherib still continued to send arrogant messages, and blasphemous letters: threatening the destruction of Jerusalem; insulting Hezekiah, and deriding the confidence of his people, who trusted in the Lord⁴. Already had Isaiah been commissioned to send an assurance of protection to Jerusalem⁵; and Nahum conspired with him to promise deliverance to Hezekiah⁶ from the Assyrian yoke; and even to anticipate, with prophetic exultation, and with reference to more glorious times, the appearance of welcome messengers in the distant scene, that should bring good tidings, and publish peace to Judah; who should celebrate her solemn feasts secure from invasion, as her enemy was “utterly cut off⁷.”

Nahum afterwards, in his two last chapters, proceeds to foretel the future downfall of the Assyrian empire; renewing those denunciations of wrath which, about ninety years before, Jonah had uttered against Nineveh,

¹ 2 Kings xviii. 16.

² Nahum signifies a comforter. Vid. Hieron. ³ Ch. i. 11.

⁴ 2 Kings xviii. and xix. 2 Chron. xxxii. Isaiah xxxvi. Nahum i. 7. comp. with Isa. xxxvi. 15.

⁵ 2 Kings xix. 20—34.

⁶ Ch. i. 13.

⁷ Nahum i. 13. 1 Kings xix. 35. Isa. xxxvii. 36, 37. Rom. x. 15. Herodotus and Berosus give disguised accounts of the miraculous destruction of Sennacherib's army. Vid. Herod. lib. ii. c. cxli. Berosus ap. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. i. ii.

but which had been suspended in consideration of the contrition of the city; this contrition, however, was but of short duration; and the Prophet predicts, therefore, in the most descriptive manner, its final destruction, which was effected probably by Nabopalasser and Cyaxares, A.M. 3362⁸, but certainly by the Medes and Babylonians, after having existed above thirteen centuries, whose confederate forces assaulted the Assyrians unexpectedly, “while they were folden together as thorns, and while they were drunken as drunkards⁹.” “The gates of the river were then opened, and the palace dissolved¹,” and an over-running flood assisted the conquerors in their devastation²; who took an endless store of spoil of silver and of gold³, making an utter end of the place of Nineveh⁴; of that vast and populous city, whose walls were an hundred feet high⁵, and capable of admitting three chariots abreast upon

⁸ Diodorus Siculus speaks of the taking of Nineveh by Arbaces and Belesis; which must have happened at a preceding time. Herodotus, however, asserts, that it was taken by Cyaxares; and since the account of Diodorus minutely corresponds with the prophetic description of Nahum, it is probable that the historian confounds the two captures, as he mistakes the situation of Nineveh, supposing it to be on the Euphrates. Usher places the final destruction of Nineveh fourteen years earlier than Prideaux, who assigns it to A.M. 3392. Diod. Sic. lib. ii. p. 140. edit. Wetsten. Herod. lib. i. c. xvi. p. 53. edit. Wesseling. Marsham’s Chron. Sæc. xviii. p. 598.

⁹ Ch. i. 10.

¹ Ch. ii. 6.

² Ch. i. 8. Diodor. Sic. lib. ii. p. 140. edit. Wetsten. Alex. Polyhist. ap. Syncel.

³ Nahum ii. 9. and Diod. lib. ii. p. 81.

⁴ Ch. i. 8, 9. and Newton’s ninth Dissertation on Prophecies, vol. i.

⁵ Diod. Sic. lib. ii. p. 65. edit. Stephan. Strabo, lib. xvi. p. 737. ed. Par.

them, and fortified with fifteen hundred towers, two hundred feet in height. So totally, indeed, was this city destroyed, that in the second century after Christ, not a vestige of it remained to ascertain the spot on which it stood ⁷. Its situation has long been a matter of uncertainty and dispute ⁸.

This illustrious prophecy thus remarkably accomplished in little more than a century after it was delivered, affords a signal evidence of the inspiration of Nahum; and a striking lesson of humility to human pride. It must have imparted much consolation to the tribes who were carried away captive by the King of Assyria, as well as to those of Benjamin and Judah; and all must have rejoiced in the hope of deliverance, to hear that their conquerors should in time be conquered, their city levelled to the dust, and their empire overturned. Passages in the book appear to be cited or referred to by the sacred writers of the New Testament ⁹.

The work is considered by Bishop Lowth as a complete and perfect poem, of which the conduct and

⁷ Lucian Dial. Mort. Charon. i. 521. ed. 1743. Lucian was a native of Samosata, a city on the Euphrates, in a country adjacent to Nineveh.

⁸ Bochart. Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. xx. p. 284. edit. Cadomi. Marshami Chronic. Sæc. xviii. p. 598. The best supported opinions concur to place the ancient Nineveh (for some supposed there were two, and some three cities of that name) on the Tigris. Herod. lib. ii. c. cl. p. 178. There are ruins on the eastern side of the river, said to be those of Nineveh. Tavernier in Harris, vol. ii. book ii. c. iv. Probably they are the ruins of the Persian Nineveh. Plin. lib. vi. c. 13. p. 311.

⁹ Comp. Nahum i. 15. with Romans x. 15. and Nahum iii. 4. with Revel. xvii. 1.

imagery are truly admirable. The fire, spirit, and sublimity of Nahum, are unequalled. His scenes are painted with great variety and splendour. The exordium of his work, in which he describes the attributes of God, is august; and the preparations for the attack, as well as the destruction of Nineveh, are represented with singular effect¹. The art with which the circumstances of the immediate destruction of the Assyrians under Sennacherib are intermingled with those of the future ruin of the empire, affords a very interesting specimen of the manner in which the Prophets delight to introduce present and distant events under one point of view. The allegorical pictures in this book are remarkably beautiful².

Neither history or tradition afford us any account of Nahum, or of the period of his death. His tomb, or pretended tomb, was formerly shown in a village named Bethogabra, now called Giblin, near Emmaus.

¹ Lowth's *Prælect.* 21.

² Chap. ii. 7. 11, 12.

OF THE

BOOK OF THE PROPHET

HABAKKUK.

SOME writers, whose relations are probably founded on traditionary accounts, describe Habakkuk as a native of Bethzakar¹; and affirm that he was of the tribe of Simeon. Some suppose him to have flourished in the reign of Manasseth²; others in that of Josiah³; and some have placed him so late as Zedekiah⁴; but the most approved opinion is, that he prophesied under Jehoiakim, who ascended the throne A.M. 3395, and reigned over Judah eleven years.

As the Prophet makes no mention of the Assyrians, and speaks of the Chaldean invasions as near at hand⁵,

¹ Epiphanius calls it Bethsocher; Dorotheus, Biticuchar; Bethzacharias is mentioned in 1 Macc. vi. 32.; this was between Jerusalem and Bethsura; and Josephus describes it as a narrow defile. Vid. Joseph. de Bel. Jud. lib. i. c. i. p. 959. Bezeth is spoken of in 1 Macc. vii. 19.

² Sedar Olam Rabba, and Zuta. Abarben. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. iv.

³ Wells, Patrick, &c.

⁴ Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. p. 391. edit. Potter. Epiphan. &c.

⁵ Chap. i. 5. ii. 3. iii. 2. 16—19.

he probably lived after the destruction of the Assyrian empire in the fall of Nineveh, A.M. 3392, and not long before the devastation of Judæa by the victories of Nebuchadnezzar. Habakkuk then was nearly contemporary with, and predicted the same events as Jeremiah; and he probably lived to witness the completion of that part of his prophecy which related to the afflictions of his country.

Habakkuk is said, as well as Jeremiah, to have chosen to remain amidst the sad scenes of a desolate and deserted land, rather than follow his conquered countrymen into captivity, and even to have refused to accompany those who afterwards retired into Egypt. There are no proofs, however, that, as some writers⁶ have asserted, he lived till within two years of the return of the Jews under Zerubbabel, which happened A.M. 3468; he appears to have died in his own country, and possibly he was buried at Cela, in the territory of Judah, where his tomb was shown in the time of Eusebius⁷.

It must be observed, that some Jews have, on very chimerical ground, pretended that our Prophet was the son of the Shunamite widow whom Elisha restored to life⁸; and the wretched biographers of the Prophets

⁶ Hieron. Prolog. in Habac.

⁷ Eusebius calls it by its old name Ceila, which is, perhaps, the same place with Echela and Betzekar. Sozomen states, with some superstitious additions, that Habakkuk's body was discovered there in the time of Theodosius the Elder. Vid. Sozom. Hist. Eccles. lib. vii. c. xxix. The Prophet's tomb was shown also at Gabata, about eleven miles from Eleutheropolis.

⁸ 2 Kings iv. 16. The name of Habakkuk had some resemblance with the words of Elisha, who pronounced to the woman ("thou shalt embrace a son.")

who wrote under the names of Epiphanius and Dorotheus relate, that on the approach of Nebuchadnezzar to Jerusalem, the Prophet fled to Ostracina, in the land of Ismael, and there continued till after the retreat of the Chaldeans. But these writers appear, as does also St. Jerom, to have confounded the Prophet with the Habakkuk of the tribe of Levi mentioned by Daniel; who is described in the Greek title to Bel and the Dragon, as the author of that book; and who is therein related to have been caught up at Jerusalem by an angel, and conveyed to Babylon, that he might afford food to Daniel in the lions' den; as also to have returned in the same miraculous manner. Habakkuk is said likewise, upon no better authority, to have delivered many prophecies not contained in the book which we now possess; to have predicted the return of the Jews from captivity; the appearance of a great light (the Messiah) and God's glory in the temple; and the destruction of the temple by a nation from the West (the Romans); and also to have written the story of Sussanna, and that of his own conveyance to Babylon.

This book, which was certainly composed by Habakkuk⁹, opens with a pious exclamation, in which the Prophet expostulates with God, in the bold terms that a zeal for his glory might suggest, on beholding the iniquities and lawless violence that prevailed among the Jews. The Almighty is represented as declaring that he would "work an incredible work in their days," that he would "raise up the Chaldeans," who are described by name; which nation, though then possibly in alliance, if not in friendship with Judah¹, should

⁹ Chap. i. 1. ii. 1, 2.

¹ 2 Kings xxiii. 29. and Prid. B.C. 610. Josiah 31.

“march through the breadth of the land,” and take possession of its dwellings.

As Nahum had before predicted the fall of the Assyrians, who had carried the ten tribes into captivity; so Habakkuk, blending probably all the invasions of the Chaldeans² under one consideration, describes in the most striking manner, their victories, fierceness, and rapidity; and then, by a sudden transition, contrasts the scene; and points out the punishment of the pride of the victors, and of their false confidence in their gods³; foreshowing, in express terms, the change and insanity of Nebuchadnezzar⁴. The Prophet still continues, with reverence for God’s attributes, to plead the cause of his countrymen, as more righteous than those whom God had “established for correction,” and to inquire why the Almighty should suffer his people to be drawn up “like fishes,” by a nation that attributed its success to its own prowess. He is then commanded to write on durable tablets, and in legible characters, the vision in which it is revealed to him, first, that the general expectation on which the living faith of the just was built, should surely come, though it must tarry the appointed time⁵; and, secondly, the

² Chap. i. 5—10. The Chaldeans invaded Judæa three times in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar; first, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, A.M. 3397; secondly, in the reign of Jechoniah, A.M. 3405; and thirdly, in the ninth year of Zedekiah, A.M. 3414.

³ Chap. ii. 4—12.

⁴ Chap. i. 11.

⁵ Ch. ii. 3, 4. Rom. i. 17. Heb. x. 37, 38. The evangelical writer cites the passage according to the Septuagint, and the original will admit of the same construction. Vid. Pearson’s Prolegomena to the Septuagint. Some Greek copies read *εἰς καιρὸν μακρὸν*, “for a long time:” the Vulgate has it, *adhuc visus procul*, “the vision is yet afar off.” Bishop Chandler is of opinion, that the third and

destruction of that kingdom of Babylon which had “spoiled many nations;” and of those evil kings who gathered unto themselves all people with insatiable ambition, who should find that graven images could not profit, but “the Lord” only “in his holy temple.”

The Prophet having heard the divine promises and threats in fearful reverence, concludes his work with an enraptured prayer, in which he supplicates God to hasten the deliverance of his people ⁶. He commemorates, in majestic language, the mercies which their forefathers had experienced from God when he delivered them out of Egypt, and conducted them through the wilderness: alluding to particular circumstances with a desultory and irregular description, but with all the enthusiasm of inspired piety; entering at once into the midst of the subject; representing God’s descent from Teman ⁷; and now contemplating “the tents of

fourth verses of the second chapter should be thus translated: “And at the end he shall break forth and not deceive; though he tarry, expect him, because he that cometh will come; he will not go beyond *God’s appointed time*. Behold, if any man draw back, the soul of him (God) shall have no pleasure in him; but the just shall live by faith.” And the learned Bishop justifies this translation by a reference to the original, and to several versions. Vid. Chandler’s Defence, ch. ii. §. i. p. 162, 163. note A. The spiritual deliverance included also the temporal restoration from the captivity. The Talmudists apply the prophecy to the advent of the Messiah.

⁶ The ancient fathers explain this hymn and other passages as allusive to the Messiah; and the Romish church has inserted into its offices some parts of it as applicable to Christ. Vid. Cyprian. adv. Jud. lib. ii. c. xxi. p. 294. edit. Par. 1726. August. de Trin. lib. iv. p. 576. tom. viii. edit. Antwerp, 1700. Hieron. Theodoret. Cyrill. &c. Office du Vendredi Saint, Antienne de Laudes, à la Messe.

⁷ Teman was a part of Seir, or Edom. Paran, according to Ptolemy, was a district towards the extremity of the wilderness; a

Cushan⁸ in affliction” and in terror at the approach of the Israelites. He finishes with a declaration of entire confidence in God, expressing sentiments of resignation which no change of circumstance should shake, and which should rejoice in the God of his salvation, though the produce of the earth and every external blessing should fail.

It should seem from the title⁹ prefixed, and from the intimation subjoined to the last verse of this prayer, as well as from the word *Selah*, which occurs three times in the chapter, that the prayer was set to music; and perhaps performed in the service of the temple; and it was possibly delivered in a kind of metre. The style of the whole book is poetical; but more especially this beautiful and perfect ode, which is decorated with every kind of imagery and figurative embellishment¹.

Habakkuk sometimes adopts the expressions of

part of it was near Kadesh. Vid. Numb. xiii. 26. and Patrick on Deut. xxxiii. 2.

⁸ Cushan may mean Chus, or Midian, a part of Arabia Petræa, and of Arabia Felix. The Arabians were called *Scenitæ*, or dwellers in tents. The Midianites dwelt in part of Cush. The Prophet may allude to the circumstances described in Exod. xv. 15. Numb. xxii. 3. or xxxi. 2—11. or possibly to some later victories. Vid. Jud. iii. 10. vii. 1, &c. Bochart, *Geogr. Sac. lib. iv. c. ii. p. 238.* edit. Cadom. 1646.

⁹ The meaning of the word *Sigionoth* is not known. Some suppose it to imply an instrument, some a tune. In the margin of our Bibles it is explained “according to the variable songs or tunes, called in Hebrew *Shigionoth*.” The directions annexed to the end of the prayer might have been added by Josiah, if the prayer was written in his reign. The meaning of the word *Neginoth* is uncertain. Vid. title to Psalm iv.

¹ Lowth’s *Prælect. Poet. 21. and 28.* and Green on chap. iii. 3—10.

Isaiah, he is imitated by succeeding Prophets, and is cited as an inspired person by the evangelical writers².

² Hab. ii. 3, 4. comp. with Heb. x. 37, 38. Rom. i. 17. Gal. iii. 11. Acts xiii. 41. comp. with Hab. i. 5. St. Luke, addressing himself more particularly to a Grecian, cites this passage according to the Septuagint; Acts xiii. 41. and Pococke has shown that the original will admit of the Apostle's construction. Vid. Pococke in *Porta Mosis*, c. iii. He derives the word *Bagojim*, which we translate "among the heathen," from the word *Baga*, which still signifies in the Arabic to be "proud or scornful;" and the word *Tamah* may be translated, "wonder and perish."

OF THE

BOOK OF THE PROPHET

ZEPHANIAH.

THE Prophet Zephaniah informs us that he was the son of Cushi ; and that the word of the Lord came to him in the days of Josiah King of Judah. He is supposed to have been of the tribe of Simeon ; and, as he traces back his pedigree for four generations¹, he was probably of distinguished birth² ; though not of the royal family, as some have imagined³ from the resemblance between the names of Hezekiah and that of Hiskia, from whom the Prophet professes himself to have been a descendant ; the period which intervened between King Hezekiah and the time in which Zephaniah flourished, being scarce sufficient to admit of three intermediate ancestors to the Prophet.

Zephaniah begins with denouncing God's wrath against "the remnant of Baal⁴, and the name of the

¹ Some of the Jews fancied that these ancestors were all Prophets. Vid. Hieron. Com. in Sophon. init.

² Cyrill.

³ R. Aben Ezra.

⁴ Baal, בעל, was anciently a name applied to the true God, and afterwards prostituted to many Pagan deities. The Baal whose

Chemarims⁵;" against them that worshipped the host of heaven, and swore by Malcham⁶; and, therefore, probably, he addressed those idolatrous priests who were not yet extirpated by the religious zeal of Josiah⁷; he foretold, also, the destruction of Nineveh, which happened A.M. 3392. Upon these considerations he may be supposed to have prophesied before the last reformation made by Josiah, A.M. 3381. He may be conceived also to have entered on his office towards

worship Jezebel introduced from Zidon, was, according to Mede, a deified King of the Phœnicians. The name was often given to the heavenly bodies when made the object of idolatrous worship. Hosea ii. 16. Vid. Selden de Diis Syriis, Syntag. ii. c. i. Mede, in Joan. Apocalyps. b. iii. ch. iv. p. 630.

⁵ The word Chemarim is translated idolatrous priests, 2 Kings xxiii. 5. They were called Chemarim or Camarim, a similar name was continued among the cruel priests of Mexico to the Spanish conquest; and the Jews, even to this day, call the monks במרים, Camarim, meaning, probably, the Priests of the Romish church, so described on account of their persecuting spirit. Vid. Kimchi in loc. and in 2 Kings xxiii. 5. Black was the customary dress of idolatrous priests in many nations. Vid. Horace, lib. i. sat. viii. 1. 23, 24. Apoll. Rhod. lib. iii. 1. 861. Apuleius, i. 10. Miles. The black ox, that represented Osiris among the Egyptians, was covered with a black silk or linen garment. Vid. Plutarch. de Isid. tom. ii. par. 2. p. 494. edit. Wytttenbach. Patrick in 2 Kings xxiii. 5.

⁶ Ch. i. 5. signifies במלכם (swearing) by their king, who probably was Moloch, the king or god of the Ammonites. Some suppose the Prophet to allude to Baal, a word which imports also Lord or Master. Malcham was the same deity with Moloch, or Melek, a god of the Ammonites. Some suppose him the same with Baal, as both words signify dominion. He was worshipped by heathens with human sacrifices, and the Israelites dedicated their children to his service by making them pass through the fire. Vid. Vossius de Orig. et Progres. Idololat. lib. ii. c. 5. Patrick in Levit. xviii. 21. and Calmet's Dissertat. sur l'Idololat.

⁷ Comp. Zeph. i. 4, 5. 9. with 2 Kings xxiii. 5, 6. 12, &c.

the commencement of the reign of that monarch, who ascended the throne A.M. 3364, since he preceded Jeremiah, who began his prophetic ministry in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign. Epiphanius relates that Zephaniah was born at Mount Sarabatha, or Baratha⁸.

Zephaniah and Jeremiah resemble each other so much in those parts where they treat of the idolatries and wickedness that prevailed in their time, that St. Isidore asserts, that Zephaniah was the abbreviator of Jeremiah; but he apparently prophesied before Jeremiah; and the latter seems to speak of those abuses as partially removed, which the former describes as present in the most flagitious extent⁹.

Zephaniah appears to have conspired with Josiah in his righteous design of bringing back the people to the worship and obedience of the true God. His first chapter contains a general denunciation of vengeance against the princes of Judah and against their city, where some disputed the Divine Providence¹, and threatens punishment also to those who superstitiously observed the rites² of idolaters, or violently invaded

⁸ Dorotheus calls the place Sabarthara. Zareth-sha-har is mentioned in Joshua, as a mountainous place in the territory of Reuben, chap. xiii. 19. Zeredatha, or Sarthas, is spoken of in 2 Chron. iv. 17. The place of Zephaniah's nativity might be Saraa, near Eshthaoh, in the tribe of Simeon, with the addition of Beth, or Batha, which signifies a house or place of residence.

⁹ Comp. Zephan. i. 4, 5. 9. with Jerem. ii. 5. 20. 32. iii. 4, 5. xix. 13.

¹ Chap. i. 8. 12.

² Chap. ii. 5; see also i. 9. The Chaldee Paraphrast applies this last verse to those who lived after the rules of the Philistines. Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. lib. ii. par. 1st. c. xxxvi. p. 366. edit. Lond. If a superstitious practice be alluded to, it might be derived from the

the property of others; and he declared that “the great day of trouble and distress, of desolation and darkness,” was at hand. In the second chapter, the prophet predicts woe to the Cherethites³; the Moabites; Ammonites; and Æthiopians⁴; and brings forward the desolation of Nineveh, in terms wonderfully descriptive⁵. These prophecies, excepting that relating to Nineveh, were chiefly accomplished by the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar⁶. In the third chapter, the prophet returns to Jerusalem, arraigns her pollutions, oppressions, and corruption, which should be visited in God’s general judgments; and concludes, as is usual with the Prophets, with promises of a remnant who should trust in the Lord’s name; of a return to his favour; and of blessings partly completed by the Gospel dispensations, but finally to be accomplished in the universal restoration of the Jews⁷. In the second and

blind prejudice of the Philistines. Vid. 1 Sam. v. 1—5. Traces of a similar observance may be found among other nations. Vid. Juven. Sat. vi. l. 47. Tibul. lib. i. eleg. ii. l. 89, 90. Lucan, lib. ii. l. 359.

³ The Cherethites, or Cherethims, were the Philistines who bordered on the Mediterranean, called Cherethims. Ezek. xxv. 16. and Κρητες, Cretans, in the Septuagint. They are supposed to have been a colony removed from Crete to Palestine. Vid. Lowth and Calmet.

⁴ Chap. ii. 12. compare with Jerem. xlv. 2. 9. Ezek. xxx. 4—10. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. xi. p. 459.

⁵ Chap. ii. 14. 15. Some have, without sufficient reason, imagined that this prophecy is an interpolation from Jonah; and that it is alluded to in Tobit xiv. 4. 8. Vid. Whiston’s Authentic Records, vol. ii. Append. iv.

⁶ Prid. Con. in 21. 31, and 32, of Nebuchadnezzar. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. i. ch. ix.

⁷ Chap. iii. 8—20. comp. particularly iii. 10. with Acts viii. 27.

third chapters, likewise, the prophet magnifies his expressions in speaking of temporal events to an importance which accords only with the effects produced by the preaching of the Gospel; in the destruction of idolatry, and in the calling of the Gentiles to God's service ⁸.

The style of Zephaniah is poetical; but it is not distinguished by any peculiar elegance or beauty, except as generally animated and impressive.

⁸ Chap. ii. 11. and ch. iii. 13. with Rev. xiv. 5.

OF THE

BOOK OF THE PROPHET

HAGGAI.

HAGGAI is generally reputed to have been born in the captivity, and to have returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel¹. He is reckoned as the tenth in order among the Prophets, both in the Hebrew and Greek copies; and may be considered as the first of the three Prophets who flourished among the Jews after their return to their country. He appears to have been raised up by God to exhort Zerubbabel², and Joshua the high-priest, the son of Josedech, to resume the work of the temple; which had been interrupted near fourteen years, in consequence of the intrigues of the Samaritans, and other obstructions excited to defeat the edict of Cyrus³. He began to prophesy in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, A.M. 3484, about fifteen years after the foundation of the temple had been laid⁴. The Prophets, after the captivity, some-

Ezra ii. 2. Cyrill. adv. Julian. Epiphan. et Doroth.

² Ezra v. 1.

³ Ezra iv. 24.

⁴ Ezra v. 1. The Darius of Haggai and Zechariah could not have been Darius Nothus, who did not begin to reign till above 100 years

times reckon by the dates of the reigns of the sovereigns to whom their country was subjected.

Haggai begins with representing to the people who delayed by evasive procrastinations the work of the temple, that they were more solicitous to build and to adorn their own houses, than to labour in the service of God. He informs them, that the scarcity and the unfruitful seasons which they experienced, were designed as a punishment for their selfish disregard to the glory of the Lord. He exhorts them to go up to the mountain and bring wood and build the house, and "I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord ⁵." His earnest remonstrance and exhortations appear to have produced their effect; and the Prophet, in order to encourage those who, fondly remembering the magnificence of that glorious structure which had been reared by Solomon, and who, perhaps, impressed with the description furnished by Ezekiel ⁶, must have lamented the comparative inferiority of the present

after the decree of Cyrus, and before whose time Zerubbabel and Joshua must have been dead, as well as all those who remembered the temple in its first glory. But as the second year of Darius Hystaspes corresponds with the seventeenth year after the return from the captivity, many might have at that time been living who remembered Solomon's temple, which was destroyed only sixty-eight years before; and we may allow the temple to have been rebuilt in about twenty years. Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. iv. p. 480. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. p. 395. Witsius Miscel. Sac. lib. i. c. xx. Dr. Allix, with less reason, contends for Darius Ochus.

⁵ Chap. i. 8. Jonathan, in the Chaldee Paraphrase, renders the passage thus—**לְאַשְׁרָאֲרֵה שְׁכִינָתִי בֵיהּ בִּיקֶר אָמַר יי**

Ut meam in ea divinitatem in gloria collocem, dicit Dominus. Vid. Targum seu Paraphrasis Chaldaica in Haggæum.

⁶ Ezek. xl.—xlviii.

building, declares to them in the name of the Lord, that the glory of this latter house, though it might appear as nothing in their eyes, yet should be greater than that of the former: “for thus saith the Lord of Hosts, yet once it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land: and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts⁷,” with a greater glory,—with a glory more apparent and manifest than was that clouded and symbolical representation of the Divine majesty which overshadowed the mercy-seat in the old temple; and which prefigured only that incarnate presence of the Messiah in whom should “dwell all the fulness of the Godhead bodily⁸.” that from this temple, though not decorated with silver and gold, there should yet appear the prince “of Peace⁹.” Haggai, after recapitulating

⁷ Chap. ii. 6, 7. comp. with Heb. xii. 26. Hag. i. 8. Gen. xii. 3. xlix. 10. Luke xx. 1. John xviii. 20.

⁸ Coloss. ii. 9. Joseph de Voison. *Procem. Pugio Fidei*, p. 166.

⁹ Chap. ii. 6—9. comp. with Isaiah ix. 6. Ephes. ii. 14. and Heb. xii. 26, 27. Some writers, who conceive that our Saviour did not appear under the second temple, but under a third, would restrict this magnificent prophecy to an assurance of the riches and splendour of the second temple, maintaining that *חמדת* might be translated desirable things; but the word, which may be a noun feminine in expression of excellency, has been understood by the best commentators to have an appropriate reference to the Messiah. The Chaldee and Vulgate render the verse in the singular number. Certain it is, that neither Zerubbabel's nor Herod's temple, did ever equal that of Solomon in magnificence; neither could any riches have compensated for the loss of the Divine glory, of the ark and its contents, the Urim and Thummim, the fire from heaven, and the other wonderful distinctions by which the first temple was characterized; much less could they have rendered the glory of the latter house

the offences that had excited God's anger, and which could not be atoned for till the people should have repented of their neglect of God's service; and after consoling them with a promise of future blessings, concludes his splendid prophecies, delivered by four distinct revelations¹, with predicting the important revolutions that should precede the great and final advent of the Messiah², typically described under the name of Zerubabel; when the kingdoms of the world should become subject to his chosen servant³: a consummation foreshadowed, perhaps, in the temporal commotions which happened before the first advent of our Saviour⁴.

These signal predictions, which obtained to Haggai the character of a Prophet⁵, were supposed by the Jews to refer to the time of the Messiah⁶. Some modern objections have, indeed, been made to the exact accomplishment of that prophecy which has been applied to Christ; on a pretence that the temple in which our Saviour appeared, was not in reality a second, but a

greater than that of the former. The solemnity, also, with which this prophecy is introduced, as well as the grandeur of its description, are hyperbolical in the extreme, unless applied to the glorious presence of the Messiah. Vid. parallel text in Malac. iii. 1. Chandler's Defen. § 1. ch. ii. Newcome, &c. The fact is, that the temple destroyed by Vespasian, notwithstanding any addition, or alteration of the structure, was considered as the second temple, and is so described by Josephus de Bel. Jud. lib. vi. c. iv. p. 1279.

¹ They are precisely marked out. Vid. ch. i. 1. ii. 1. 10. 20.

² Chap. ii. 21—23.

³ Dan. ii. 44. and Rev. xi. 15.

⁴ As the Babylonian commotions under Darius; the Macedonian wars, and those between the successors of Alexander, or the disturbances in the Roman empire, which succeeded the death of Cæsar. Vid. Orosius, lib. vi. c. xviii. p. 384. Biblioth. Patr. tom. v. pars 1.

⁵ Ezra v. 1. vi. 14. Heb. xii. 26.

⁶ Aben-Ezra ap. Degling. Obser. Sac. par. iii. Observ. 20.

third temple, rebuilt by Herod : but it is certain, that whatever alterations and additions were made by Herod to Zerubbabel's temple, yet it did not constitute an entirely new building⁷; and the structure commenced by Herod, for the enlargement and increased elevation of the temple, was carried on as a gradual work of forty-six years. No nominal distinction was ever made between the two⁸, both being considered, in popular language, as the second temple; and had the Prophet adopted such distinction, it must have led the Jews to expect a demolition of the temple, instead of serving to console them. It is, likewise, undeniable, that the Jews did, in consequence of this prophecy, expect the Messiah to appear in this temple⁹, till after its destruction by Vespasian; they then applied it to a third, which they still expect.

The style of Haggai is represented by the learned Lowth as entirely prosaic¹; but Bishop Newcome has given a translation of it on a persuasion that a great part of it admits of a metrical division². Haggai, according to some traditionary accounts, must have been conversant with metrical compositions. In some manuscripts of the Septuagint, Vulgate, and other versions of the Psalter, titles are prefixed to the cxxxviiiith,

⁷ Joseph. Antiq. lib. xv. c. xi. p. 700. edit. Hudson.

⁸ Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. i. c. xxi. Philo de Virtut. vol. ii. p. 574. edit. Mangey. Prid. Con. An. A.C. 534.

⁹ Talm. Sanhedrin. c. xi. Rabbi Solomon. Midr. on Deut. xxxiii. 12. Ber. Ketan. on Gen. i. par. ii. Ber. Rab. on Gen. xxvii. 27. Talm. Hier. Beracoth in Lightf. R. Sal. Jarchi. Book Caphtor, quoted by Grotius de Verit. lib. v.

¹ Prælect. Poet. 21.

² Newcome's attempt towards an improved version of the Twelve Minor Prophets.

cxlvith, cxlviiith, and cxlviiiith Psalms³, by which they are ascribed to Haggai and Zechariah. But as these titles are not in the Hebrew copies, and as the dates and occasion of these several psalms are in some measure uncertain, we can place but little confidence in these inscriptions. It is, however, very probable, that these Prophets were concerned in the composition of some of those hymns, which were produced after the return from the captivity. Haggai was possibly of the sacerdotal descent; and Epiphanius relates, that he was buried among the priests at Jerusalem. He and Zechariah are said to have been the first persons who sung the Hallelujah in the temple. The Rabbins report, that they were both of the great synagogue⁴, which they suppose to have had its origin in the time of Darius Hystaspes.

³ Prol. in Bib. Max.

⁴ For this reason, Isaac Abarbenel excludes them, as well as Malachi, from the rank of Prophets, though their books were admitted into the canon, and they were considered as Prophets by the Jews. The synagogue, however, was admitted to have contained some persons entitled to the rank of Prophets. Vid. Maimon. More Nevoch. par i. c. lix. p. 101. Vid. Auctor. Beth Israel. ad Bava Bathra, c. i.

OF THE

BOOK OF THE PROPHET

ZECHARIAH.

ZECHARIAH was the son of Barachiah, and the grandson of Iddo¹: the last of whom is supposed to have been a different person from the Iddo mentioned by Nehemiah as one of the priests who returned from Babylon under the conduct of Zerubbabel²; but it is very possible that Zechariah might have been of the sacerdotal race; and when released by the decree of Cyrus from the captivity, in which he probably was born, have been accompanied by his grandfather in the general restoration. No certain information, however,

¹ Chap. i. 1. Ezra v. 1. vi. 14. where son is put for descendant, as is usual in Scripture. Vid. Dan. v. 2. Matt. i. 1.

² Nehem. xii. 4. St. Jerom says, that it was not doubted that Iddo was the same person with the man of God who was sent to Jeroboam, vid. 1 Kings xiii. 1, 2. 2 Chron. xii. 15. but this was probably an error. It is certain, at least, that Zechariah could not be the grandson of a man who lived above 400 years before he began to prophesy. It is doubtful whether Iddo, the ancestor of Zechariah, is described in this book as a Prophet, for that title is ambiguously placed in ch. i. 1. The Septuagint and Vulgate apply the title to Zechariah. Ζαχαρίαν τὸν τοῦ Βαραχίου, υἱὸν Ἀδδὲ, τὸν Προφήτην. See Grabe's Septuagint.

can be collected concerning the time or place in which Zechariah was born. The accounts concerning him are precarious, and of little authority³; we are told by Sozomen that his body was found with a sacerdotal white robe at Caphar, or Capher⁴, at the extremity of the territory of Eleutheropolis; while by others we are informed that he was buried at Betharia, in the land of Noeman, about forty furlongs from Eleutheropolis⁵; not to mention that, according to other accounts, his remains were deposited near those of Haggai at Jerusalem⁶, and that his pretended tomb is still shown at the foot of Mount Olivet.

But little reliance can be placed on these and similar representations, some, or indeed all, of which have confounded the Prophet with other persons mentioned in the scriptures. Sozomen imagined that the Prophet was the same person with Zechariah the son of Jebe-rechiah, the witness mentioned by Isaiah⁷, and who appears to have lived in the time of Ahaz, about A.M. 3262. Others, by a great anachronism, make him coeval with Joash⁸, or Uzziah⁹.

³ Sozomen, Nicephorus, &c.

⁴ Sozomen, who relates an idle tale concerning the miraculous discovery of Zechariah's body, in a perfect state at Caphar, adds to the account, that an infant was found under the Prophet's feet, buried with the ornaments of royalty; and that about the same time an apocryphal book was also found in which it was written that the favourite son of Joash died suddenly on the seventh day after that monarch had slain Zechariah, and that Joash, considering it as a judgment, ordered that his son's body should be buried with that of the Prophet. Sozomen, lib. ix. c. ult. Niceph. lib. xiv. c. viii.

⁵ Dorotheus.

⁶ Epiphanius.

⁷ Isaiah viii. 2.

⁸ 2 Chron. xxiv. 21. Epiphan. &c.

⁹ 2 Chron. xxvi. 5.

Zechariah¹ was unquestionably a contemporary with Haggai; and began to prophesy two months after him, in the eighth month of the second year of Darius Hystaspes, A.M. 3484; being commissioned, as well as Haggai, to exhort the Jews to proceed in the building of the temple, after the interruption which the work had suffered. We are informed by Ezra, that the Jews “prospered through the prophesying²,” and obeyed the instructions of Zechariah, who continued to prophesy about two years; the last revelation of which the date is specified in this book, having been delivered in the fourth day of the ninth month of the fourth year of Darius Hystaspes³; Zechariah, therefore, probably lived to witness the completion of the temple, which was finished in about six years; and having contributed either as a priest, or a member of the great synagogue, as well as a Prophet, to promote the welfare and interests of his country, died in peace, being, it may be presumed, a different person from the Zacharias mentioned by Christ⁴.

¹ Ch. i. 1. Ezra v. 1. vi. 14. Haggai i. 1. ² Ezra vi. 14.

³ Ch. vii. 1. The month Chisleu corresponds with part of our November and December.

⁴ Our Saviour, vid. Matt. xxiii. 35. imputes to the Jews the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias; accusing them of having slain him between the temple and the altar. By this martyr, however, was probably meant Zacharias, the son of Jehoiada, who is related, in 2 Chron. xxiv. 21, to have been slain by command of Joash in the court of the Lord's house. There is no account of the Prophet's having been killed, and in his time the temple was in ruins. The names are the same in the original, there being no vowel between the ז and the כ. It is probable, therefore, that the copyists of St. Matthew inserted Barachiah, (perhaps first in the margin,) thinking that it must have been the Prophet whose writings were

Zechariah, who certainly collected his own prophecies into their present form ⁵, is mentioned as a Prophet by Ezra ⁶; and is cited as an inspired writer by the sacred penmen of the New Testament ⁷. The minute accomplishment of his own illustrious prophecies bears a signal testimony to the truth of that infallible Spirit by which he was inspired. He was so distinguished for the peculiar excellency of his predictions, as to be styled the sun among the lesser Prophets; it is, however, the sun sometimes obscured by clouds. The ænigmatical cast of his visions, which are of difficult interpretation, must, indeed, be supposed necessarily to produce some shades. The general design of the work, however, is sufficiently obvious; and it is occasionally illumined with the brightest and most striking passages.

Zechariah, in conformity with his first intention, begins with general exhortations to his countrymen: exciting them to repent from the evil ways of their fathers, to whom the Prophets had vainly addressed their cry; he describes, in an interesting representation which he had beholden in vision, angels of the Lord

extant. And this is confirmed, if we consider that Barachiah is not mentioned in the parallel passage of St. Luke. Vid. ch. xi. 51. And St. Jerom assures us, that in a manuscript copy of the Gospel of St. Matthew, used by the Nazarenes, which he obtained permission from the inhabitants of Berœa in Syria to transcribe, it was written, the son of Jehoiada. Vid. Hieron. in Matt. xxiii. et de Script. Eccles. Josephus relates, that Zechariah, the son of Baruch, was slain in the temple, but this was not long before its destruction, and he was not a Prophet. Vid. de Bell. Jud. lib. iv. c. 5. p. 1185. edit. Hudson.

⁵ Ch. i. 9. ii. 2.

⁶ Ezra v. 1. vi. 14.

⁷ Matt. xxi. 4, 5. xxvi. 31. xxvii. 9. Mark xiv. 27. John xiv. 15. xix. 37. Ephes. iv. 25. Rev. i. 7. and the marginal references in our Bible.

ministering to his will, and the angel of the covenant interceding for mercy on Jerusalem, and the desolate cities of Judæa, which had experienced God's indignation seventy years⁸; while other nations connected with Judah were in peace. He announces God's displeasure against the heathens who "had helped forward the affliction" of the Jews, by endeavours to impede the building of the temple; and declares, that the house of the Lord should be built in Jerusalem, and Zion be comforted⁹. The Prophet then proceeds figuratively to represent the increase and prosperity of the Jews¹: promising that God should be unto them "a wall of fire;" that he should be the glory in the midst of them, and the nations to be converted to his service²; that the high-priest should be restored with his former splendour in the person of Joshua; who is declared to be the type³ of that spiritual servant of the Lord, who should be called "the branch⁴," become the

⁸ Ch. i. 12. Zechariah reckons these seventy years from the besieging of Jerusalem in the ninth year of the reign of Zedekiah, and the tenth month, for which a solemn fast was kept by the Jews. Comp. 2 Kings xxv. 1. with Zech. viii. 19. this ends in the second year of Darius. If we reckon from the destruction of Jerusalem in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the seventy years will be completed in the fourth year of Darius. See Zech. vii. 1. 5. Prid. An. A. C. 518.

⁹ Ch. i. 16, 17.

¹ Ch. ii. 4. comp. with Joseph. de Bello Jud. lib. v. c. 4. sect. 2. Vitringa, &c.

² Ch. ii. 10—13. comp. with John i. 14. Rev. xxi. 13.

³ Ch. iii. 8. The word מופת signifies a wonder, or a type. Vid. Isa. xx. 3. Ezek. xii. 7. xxiv. 24. Chand. Def. ch. iii. § 1. 4.

⁴ Ch. iii. 8, 9. A title of the Messiah, as descending from the stock of David. Vid. Isa. iv. 2. Jerem. xxiii. 5. The Chaldee Paraphrast applies these texts to Christ, who is eminently called

chief corner-stone of his church, and remove the iniquity of the land, and the success of whose government is foreshown under the promised completion of Zerubabel's designs⁵. The Prophet then interweaves in his discourse some instructive admonitions: he unfolds the ample roll of God's judgment against theft and perjury, and such other prevailing wickedness⁶, as had provoked the former vengeance of the Almighty. He emblematically portrays the four successive empires that had been, or should be employed as ministers of wrath⁷; and is empowered to foretel the establishment of the Jewish government under the Messiah; and to crown the representative of Christ, (who should be both King and Priest,) with the emblems of civil and religious authority united⁸, which were to be preserved in the temple as memorials of the prophetic ceremony, and as expressive of the character of the expected Messiah.

To the captives from Babylon, or other professors of the Hebrew religion⁹, who pharisaically observed

God's servant. Vid. Isa. xli. 1. xlix. 3. lii. 13. liii. 11. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. The Seventy translate the word צמח (which signifies a branch rising upward from the root or stalk) in this and other places, Ἀνατολή, the East, or sun-rising, thence applied to Christ. Luke i. 78. and translated "the day-spring." Hence, perhaps, the Jewish prophecy mentioned by Tacitus, as contained in the ancient writings of the Priests, (ut valesceret Oriens). Vid. Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. xiii. Grot. in loc. et ad Agg. ii. 8.

⁵ Ch. iv. 9, 10.

⁶ Ch. v. and Deut. xxvii. xxviii.

⁷ Ch. vi. The chariots and horses probably represent the Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman empires. The two brazen mountains may signify God's immoveable decrees. Vid. Psal. xxxvi. 6.

⁸ Ch. vi. 10—15. comp. with Jerem. xxxiii. 15. xxiii. 5.

⁹ Some have supposed that they who were sent to pray before

solemn fasts without true contrition, the Prophet recommends judgment, mercy, and compassion¹; and then addressing himself to the Jews, he promises a return of righteousness and favour to Jerusalem: assuring them, that the mournful fasts with which they lamented its destruction, should be converted into cheerful feasts; and that the church of the Lord should be enlarged by the accession of many nations converted by means of the Jews².

The twelfth verse of the eleventh chapter, which exhibits a prophetic description of some circumstances afterwards fulfilled in our Saviour, appears to be cited by St. Matthew as spoken by Jeremy³. As this and the two preceding chapters, which are connected by a kind of continuation, have been thought to contain some particulars more suitable to the period of Jeremiah, than to that of Zechariah, or to the design of his appointment⁴, some learned writers have con-

the Lord, vid. ch. vii. 2. were Persian officers of Darius. Theodoret imagines that they were Cutheans, or Samaritans. Some have supposed that they were distant inhabitants of Judæa; but probably they were Jewish captives from Babylon. Vid. Calmet, and other Commentators.

¹ Ch. vii. 9, 10. See Matt. xxiii. 23.

² Ch. viii.

³ Matt. xxvii. 9, 10.

⁴ Mede is of opinion, that the description of Tyre, in ch. ix. 3. was not applicable to her condition after the destruction effected by Nebuchadnezzar; but New Tyre might be rising into prosperity in the time of Zechariah. The prophecies in the ninth chapter against Damascus and the Philistines, and especially against Askelon, have been judged more descriptive of the desolation produced by Nebuchadnezzar, than of the circumstances which resulted from the victories of Alexander. It may be observed, likewise, that Assyria is threatened in ch. x. 11. though that empire was destroyed before the time of Zechariah. Assyria, however, may be put for Syria, or the

ceived⁵, that they were written by the former Prophet; that they differ in style from the eight first chapters⁶, and that they have been accidentally transposed, or joined to those of Zechariah, from similarity of subject. Other writers are, however, of opinion, that St. Matthew, in the place referred to, might allude to some traditional prophecy of Jeremiah; or that the name of Jeremy was improperly added or substituted by a mistake of the copyist of the Gospel for that of Zechariah⁷. These writers maintain, that the chapters concerned in this inquiry admit of a construction perfectly consistent with the time of Zechariah; that Zechariah in them describes the conquest of Damascus, Tyre, and Sidon, and of the cities of the Philistines, as effected by Alexander⁸; the victories of the Maccabees over the troops of Antiochus, who was of Grecian descent; with future successes to be obtained by conversion to the true God, and deliverances similar to those of Egypt and Assyria⁹. It is further supposed, that Zechariah, then angry at the little effect produced

enemies of God in general. Some, also, apply the passage in ch. xi. 1—6. at least in the first instance to the destruction of Jerusalem produced by the Babylonians; though, perhaps, it may refer only to those calamitous circumstances which occurred subsequently to the time of Zechariah, as under Antiochus or Vespasian. Vid. 1 Macc. i. Joseph. de Bell. Jud.

⁵ Hammond in Matt. xxvii. Mede, book iv. epist. 31. 60. Kidder. Demonst. part ii. c. iii. Randolph's Texts cited in N. T. n. 28.

⁶ Lowth's Prælect. Poet. 21.

⁷ Matt. xxvii. 9. One Manuscript, the Syriac, Persic, and other versions, read *διὰ τοῦ προφήτου*, without any name, as do some of the fathers. St. Jerom professes to have seen a book attributed to Jeremiah, in which the prophetic passage was contained. See Whitby on Matthew.

⁸ Ch. ix. 1—16.

⁹ Ch. ix. 13. x. 10, 11.

by his endeavours, denounces the future destruction of Jerusalem, its temple¹, and lofty houses; and represents himself as breaking in vision the symbolical badges of his pastoral office, and as assuming "the instruments of a foolish shepherd," to foreshow the cruelties which should be exercised by a succession of wicked priests and rulers²: interspersed with, and adumbrated by which temporal promises and threats, are discovered prophecies of Christ; who is spoken of in the most striking manner, with respect to his lowly entrance to Jerusalem; as "riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass³;" and again as being valued at thirty pieces of silver, which is typically foreshown in a visionary representation⁴.

Whatever may be determined as to these three chapters, there is not sufficient reason to suppose, with some commentators, that the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters also, which constitute a distinct prophecy, were written before the time of Zechariah; since they contain nothing incompatible with the period

¹ Ch. xi. 1—3. Lebanon is supposed to mean the temple with its cedar buildings. The Jewish writers relate, that before the destruction of the temple, the doors, though barred with iron, opened of their own accord; when R. Johanan, a disciple of R. Hillel, directing his speech to the temple, said, "I know thy destruction is at hand, according to the prophecy of Zechariah," (open thy doors, O Lebanon). Tacitus and Josephus give an account of the portentous opening of the doors: Tac. Hist. lib. v. c. xiii. Jos. Bell. Jud. lib. vi. c. v.

² Ch. xi. 15—17. Basnage's Hist. of the Jews, book vii. Prid. Con. par. i. b. iii.

³ Ch. ix. 9. comp. with Matt. xxi. 2—9. where the Evangelist, perhaps, refers likewise to Isaiah lxii. 11. Vid. also, John xii. 14, 15. who cites the sense rather than the words of the Prophet.

⁴ Ch. xi. 12, 13. comp. with Matt. xxvi. 15. xxvii. 3—10.

of that Prophet⁵. At whatever time they were composed, they were unquestionably the production of an inspired writer, since they are cited as such in the New Testament⁶. They contain prophecies which refer entirely to the circumstances of the Christian dispensation. They begin with the assurance of some final victories to be obtained over the enemies of Jerusalem⁷; they describe the restoration of the Jews, their conversion and bitter compunction for having pierced the Messiah⁸. The Prophet, then points to the first promulgation of the Gospel, when “a fountain should be opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness⁹.” With an animated apostrophe in the name of the Lord of Hosts, he calls upon “the sword to awake against the Shepherd and against the man that was his” (the Lord’s) “fellow¹.” He represents “the Shepherd as smitten,

⁵ It has been supposed that the Prophet in ch. xii. 11. alludes to the mourning made for Josiah, who was slain at Megiddo. Vid. 2 Kings xxiii. 29. 2 Chron. xxxv. 22—25. But Zechariah might speak of this mourning as proverbially sorrowful, though it happened before his time. Some also have imagined, that the prediction in ch. xiii. 2—6. was uttered before the captivity, though the abuses of which the final extirpation is there foretold, were not so totally suppressed as to be unknown after the return from Babylon. The Prophets likewise, in general, in their descriptions of the final reformation to be produced in the church, foretel the utter destruction of idolatry. Vid. Isaiah ii. 18. xxx. 22. xxxi. 7. Hosea ii. 17. Micah v. 13.

⁶ John xix. 37. Matt. xxi. 4, 5. xxvi. 31.

⁷ Ch. xii. 1—9. comp. with Ezek. xxxvii. xxxix. and Rev. xx. 9.

⁸ Ch. xii. 10.

⁹ Ch. xiii. 1.

¹ Chap. xiii. 7. עֲמִיתִי, “my associate;” in Sept. Πολίτην. See Luke ii. 35. Philip. ii. 6. Acts ii. 23.

and the sheep scattered ²," at a time when it should come to pass that in all the land, two parts should be cut off, and the remainder be left, whose faith should be tried in affliction, and should finally acknowledge the Lord their God ³. In the last chapter, he more minutely describes the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans ⁴, and the ultimate discomfiture of the enemies of the Jews ⁵, together with the final and triumphant establishment of the righteous kingdom of Christ, who should be king over the whole earth ⁶. The Prophet foretels these particulars with a clearness which indicated the near approach of the events of which he speaks.

The style of Zechariah is so remarkably similar to that of Jeremiah, that the Jews were accustomed to observe, that the spirit of Jeremiah had passed into him. He is generally prosaic till towards the conclusion of his book, when he becomes more elevated and poetical. The whole work is beautifully connected by easy transitions, and present and future scenes are blended with the most delicate contexture.

Epiphanius attributes some predictions to Zechariah, which were delivered according to his account by the Prophet at Babylon, and on the journey in his return from thence; but these are not extant in Scripture, and are of very questionable authority. The Zechariah

² Chap. xiii. 7. comp. with Matt. xxvi. 31. and Mark xiv. 27.

³ Chap. xiii. 8, 9. ~ Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. vii.

⁴ Chap. xiv. 1, 2. that by Vespasian. Vid. Euseb. Demonstr. lib. vi. c. 13, 14. 18. &c. See also, lib. x. p. 478. 487. edit. Paris, 1623.

⁵ Chap. xiv. 3.

⁶ Chap. xiv. 8. and following verse.

to whom an apocryphal book is ascribed by some writers, is supposed to have been a different person from the Prophet, and according to Fabricius, he was the father of John the Baptist ⁷.

⁷ Athan. Synop. Fabric. Cod. Pseudep. Script. vol. i.

OF THE
BOOK OF THE PROPHET
MALACHI.

MALACHI was the last of those Prophets who flourished before the Gospel dispensation. Some writers strangely imagined that Malachi was merely a general name, signifying the angel of the Lord; a messenger, or Prophet, because the title of Malach-Jehovah, or messenger of the Lord, was often applied to the Prophets¹. The Septuagint version has rendered מלאכי, Malachi, my angel; and several of the Fathers have quoted Malachi under the title “of the angel of the Lord;” and hence some have fancied that he was an angel incarnate, and not a man². Others have supposed that under the appellative name of Malachi, was intended Ezra³; and have maintained that Malachi is not men-

¹ Isa. xliv. 26. Haggai i. 13. Maimon. More Nevoch. par. ii. c. xli. “Propheta enim non raro vocatur Angelus.”

² Origen. tom. ii. in Joan. Hieron. Præfat. in Malach. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xx. c. xxv. Tertull. cont. Judæos, p. 187. The same idea prevailed concerning Haggai, the Baptist, &c.

³ Abrah. Zacut. in Juchasin. David Ganz, Chaldee Paraph. in Malach. Buxtorf. Tiberiad. c. iii. Hieron. Præf. in Malach. Isidore, &c.

tioned among the Prophets in the book of Ecclesiasticus. But it is very certain, that Malachi was a different person from Ezra. His work had a distinct place in the Hebrew canon; and in fact he is as much noticed by the author of Ecclesiasticus, as any of the other minor Prophets; all of whom are celebrated under one collective memorial⁴. The names of the Prophets are very often expressive of their office; and that of Malachi was probably assumed as descriptive of his character⁵, as he was eminently distinguished for the virtues of his mind, and for the graces of his exterior form; it being unquestionably the appropriate name of a human Prophet.

Malachi is represented by some traditionary accounts, to have been of the tribe of Zabulon, and a native of Sapha⁶: to have died young, and to have been buried with his ancestors at Sapha, after having assisted as a member of the great Synagogue in the re-establishment of order and prosperity in his country. Usher conceives him to have flourished about A.M. 3588, which is about twenty years later than the period assigned to him by Blair⁷. But as it appears from the consent of all

⁴ Ecclus. xlix. 10.

⁵ Some inventive writers absurdly say, that an angel visibly appeared to confirm immediately what the Prophet uttered. Vid. Epiph. Doroth. et Chron. Alex.

⁶ Or Sopha, or Supha, or Socha. Vid. Epiphan. Doroth. &c.

⁷ St. Jerom makes Malachi contemporary with Darius Hystaspes. Vid. Hieron. Præfat. in 12 Proph. et Præfat. in Mal. Euseb. Chron. lib. ii. Theodor. Procem. in 12 Proph. But if we admit Blair's account, which gives Malachi the highest antiquity, he must rather have been contemporary with Artaxerxes Longimanus, or Darius Nothus. Vid. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xxxv. Clem. Alex. Strom. i. p. 396. Cyrill. Alexand. Præf. in Malach.

Jewish and Christian antiquity, that the light of prophecy expired in Malachi⁸, we may suppose that the termination of his ministry coincided with the accomplishment of the first seven weeks of Daniel's prophecy, which was the period allotted for "sealing the vision and prophecy"⁹. This, according to Prideaux's account, must be assigned to A.M. 3595, but according to the calculations of Bishop Lloyd, to A.M. 3607, twelve years later¹. Whichever reckoning we may prefer, Malachi must be admitted to have completed the canon of the Old Testament, about four hundred years before the birth of Christ; when the great designs of Providence were completed in the termination of the prophetic ministry; and when a scheme of prophecy was unfolded which in its entire contexture was to be accommodated to, and to characterize the Messiah.

Malachi certainly prophesied some time after Haggai and Zechariah, for in his time the temple was rebuilt and its worship re-established²; and his ministry coincided with or succeeded the period of Nehemiah. He censures the same offences that had excited the indignation of that governor, and which he had not been able entirely to reform; for Malachi, speaking of God's superior kindness to the Israelites above the Edomites, begins with declaiming against the priests for their profane and mercenary conduct, and the people for

⁸ Abraham Zacutus in Juchasin. David. Seder Olam Zuta. Maimon. Massech. Sotah. c. ult. Edict. Bartiner. Gem. Sanhed. c. 1. § 13. Cosri Maam. 3. § 30. R. Tanchum. 1 Macc. iv. 46. ix. 27. Clemens Alex. Strom. lib. i. Justin Martyr entertained a false notion that the spirit of prophecy did not cease till the Christian æra. Smith on Prophecy, ch. xii.

⁹ Dan. ix. 24.

¹ See p. 215, note ⁹, of this work.

² Chap. i. 7. 10. 12. iii. 10.

their multiplied divorces and intermarriages with idolatrous nations³; he threatens them with punishment and rejection; declaring that God would “make his name great among the Gentiles⁴,” for that he was wearied with the impiety of Israel. From this the Prophet takes occasion awfully to proclaim that the Lord whom they sought, should suddenly come, with restoration, as it were, of the Divine presence, to his temple, preceded by that messenger who, like a harbinger, should prepare his way; that the Lord, when he should appear, should purify the sons of Levi from their unrighteousness, and refine them as metal from the dross⁵;” that then “the offering of Judah,” the spiritual sacrifice of the heart, should “be pleasant to the Lord,” as was that of the Patriarchs, or their un-

³ Mal. ii. comp with Neh. xiii. 23—27. and Mal. i. 10. iii. 8. with Neh. xiii. 10, 11.

⁴ Chap. i. 11. The latter part of this verse relative to Mincha, or rather Ve-men-e-heh וּמִנְחָה, a pure oblation to be generally offered up, was considered in the primitive church as an express prophecy of the Christian sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving with reference to the atonement of Christ commemorated in the Eucharist, of which the circumstances are described under the typical rites of the Jewish worship. Hence the words of the passage were inserted into a hymn in the liturgy of the church of Alexandria, which is called the liturgy of St. Mark. Vid. Levit. ii. 1. Heb. xiii. 15. Rev. viii. 3. Tertullian adv. Judæos, p. 188. § 5. Justin Martyr. Dial. cum Tryphone, pars 2. p. 220. Ambrose de Officiis Ministrorum, lib. i. cap. 48. Umbra in Lege, Imago in Evangelio, Veritas in Cœlestibus. Eusebius, Demonstrat. Evangel. lib. i. c. x. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xxxv. Mede's Discourses on the Christian Sacrifice, book ii. c. i—ix. p. 355—379. edit. 1677.

⁵ Chap. iii. 1—3. comp. with Isaiah i. 25. Mark i. 2. Luke i. 76.

corrupted ancestors ⁶; and that the Lord would quickly exterminate the corruptions and adulteries which prevailed. He foretels the extension of Christ's kingdom over the Gentiles, from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same ⁷. He proceeds with an earnest exhortation to repentance: promising high rewards and remembrance to the righteous in that last day, when the Lord should select unto himself a peculiar treasure, and finally discern between the righteous and the wicked ⁸. Malachi concludes with an impressive assurance of approaching salvation to those who feared God's name, from that "Sun of righteousness which should arise with healing in his wings;" and render them triumphant: enjoining, in the solemn close of his exhortation, when uttering, as it were, the last admonition of the Jewish Prophets, an observance of the Law of Moses; till the advent of Elijah ⁹, the Prophet, who before the coming of that "great and dreadful day of the Lord, should turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children ¹ to their fathers;"

⁶ Chap. iii. 4. "As in the days of old."

⁷ Chap. i. 11.

⁸ Chap. iii. 16—18.

⁹ Chap. iv. 5. John came in the spirit and power of Elias. Vid. Luke i. 17. and resembled him in office and character. Vid. Mark ix. 12. Eccclus. xlviii. 10. The Seventy following the received Jewish tradition, add "the Tishbite." In this sense John denies himself to be Elias. John i. 21. He was not Elias himself, but another Elias, the antitype of the first.

¹ It is proposed to translate לַבְּנֵי, al; not 'to,' but 'with.' Vid. Exod. xxxv. 22. et Kimchi. And then the passage means not that Elijah should reconcile religious differences between intimate relations, but that he should produce a general reformation. Vid. Arnald. in Eccclus. xlviii. 10.

who should produce an entire amendment in the minds of the people.

Thus Malachi sealed up the volume of prophecy in the description of that personage at whose appearance the evangelists begin the gospel history²; and he who terminated the illustrious succession of the Prophets of the first dispensation, and predicted the coming of the Baptist, was in an especial degree entitled to a share of our Saviour's testimony, when He declared, in terms which defined the objects and extent of Jewish prophecy, that "all the Prophets prophesied until John³." Malachi is, likewise, elsewhere frequently cited as a Prophet by the writers of the New Testament⁴.

The work of Malachi was admirably calculated to excite religious impressions, and an observance of that Law which was to direct the chosen people of God until a more perfect institution should be established. He calls upon the people, in animated language, to testify their gratitude and reverence for God; he particularly reminds the priests of the covenant of peace which God had made with Levi for the fear wherewith he feared the Lord, "when the law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips," when "he walked with God in peace and equity, and turned many away from iniquity;" and he emphatically adds, with intimation it might seem of the ordinance to be established of a purer ministry, "for the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law

² Mark i. 1, 2.

³ Matt. xi. 13. Luke xvi. 16. Jansen. in Eccclus. xlviii. 2.

⁴ Matt. xi. 10. xvii. 10—12. Mark i. 2. ix. 11, 12. Luke i. 17. vii. 27. Rom. ix. 13.

at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts ⁵.”

The style of Malachi has been represented as of the middle kind; it is not remarkable for beauty, as he lived in the decline of Hebrew poetry, which decayed much after the Jewish captivity.

⁵ Chap. ii. 4—7. 2 Corinth. v. 20. The Jews, by the messenger of the covenant, understood the Messiah. See Raym. Martini, *Pugio Fidei*, cap. ix. p. 376. edit. Lips. 1687. See also, p. 166, on Haggai ii. 7.

PREFACE

TO THE

APOCRYPHAL BOOKS.

THE books which are admitted into our Bibles under the description of Apocryphal Books, are so denominated from a Greek word, which is expressive of the uncertainty and concealed nature of their original¹. They have no title to be ranked with the inspired writings already discussed; and though, in respect of their antiquity and valuable contents, they are annexed to the canonical books, it is in a separate division: and by no means upon an idea that they are of equal authority, in point of doctrine, with them; or that they

¹ Apocrypha, from ἀποκρύπτω, to hide. The word seems to have been first applied only to books of doubtful authority; or as it is used by Origen, to imply works out of the canon. It was afterwards employed to characterize spurious and pernicious books. It has been thought, that books of doubtful character were first termed Apocryphal by the Jews, because they were removed ἀπὸ τῆς κρυπτῆς from the ark of the covenant, where the canonical books were placed, or because shut up from the generality of readers, and concealed, as some assert, in a chest of the temple. In the primitive church, some of these books, especially those of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, were imparted to Catechumens, and all of them were allowed to be read under certain restrictions. Athanas. Synop. tom. ii. p. 58, edit. Par. 1627.

are to be received as oracles of faith; to sanctify opinions, or to determine religious controversies.

It is universally allowed, that these books were not in the canon of the Jews, to whom alone "were committed the oracles of God²;" and, indeed, they were composed after the closing of the sacred catalogue. Some writers, without, however, a shadow of authority, have pretended that Tobit, Judith, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and perhaps others, were received by the Jews into a second canon³, said to be made by a council assembled at Jerusalem in the time of Eleazar the high-priest, upon the occasion of sending the seventy-two interpreters to Ptolemy King of Egypt⁴; and that the rest were canonized by a third council, assembled in the time of Sammai and Hillel; but of these councils, the Jews, tenacious as they are of traditions, have no account or memorial; and the books in question were composed after the cessation of the prophetic spirit, by persons who displayed no characters of inspiration; and some of whom seem to have disclaimed its pretensions⁵. They were not accepted by the Jews as of canonical authority, nor were they, as some have imagined, placed among the **כתובים**, (writings,) a title under which some of the Holy Scriptures were ranged. No books, indeed, were admitted into the canon of the Jews, but those of

² Rom. iii. 2. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. § viii. p. 1333. Hieron. Prol. Gal. Introduction, p. 7.

³ Hence they are sometimes called Deutero-canonical by the Romanists.

⁴ Genebrard. Chron. lib. ii. p. 190. col. 2. and p. 284. col. 1. Maldonat. de Sacram. Pœnit. q. de Purgat. p. 145. Serar. in Macc. Præloq. iii.

⁵ 1 Macc. ix. 27. 2 Macc. ii. 30, 31. xv. 38.

writers allowed to be inspired, and chronicles of their own nation, transmitted from age to age, as divinely authenticated records of their state and polity ⁶.

Tobit and Judith were, indeed, supposed by Rabbinical conceits, to have been derived from that lower kind of inspiration which was called *Bath Col, filia vocis* ⁷. But this was an absurd fancy, and none of the books are cited either as prophetic or doctrinal by our Saviour or his apostles ⁸; and though some writers have pretended to discover a coincidence between certain passages contained in them, and others in the New Testament, it will be found that the evangelical writers on these occasions only accidentally concur in sentiment or expression with the authors of the apocryphal books; or that the resemblance results from an imitation of passages in the sacred writings of the Old Testament, which the evangelical and the apocryphal writers might equally have had in view. But, indeed, if any occasional allusion, or borrowed expressions, could be proved, they would by no means

⁶ The later Jews esteemed some of the prophetical books to be *Hagiographa* in a higher sense of the word; supposing them to be derived from the second degree in their scale of prophecy. Vid. Maimon. *More Nevoch.* p. ii. c. xlv. Huet. in *Judith.* prop. iv. p. 170. The word was, perhaps, first intended to describe the uninspired productions of holy men; and afterwards improperly applied to fanciful distinctions of the sacred books. Vid. *Introduction to this work*, p. 9.

⁷ Preface to the Prophets.

⁸ *Index Testimon. a Christ. et Apost. citat. ex Vet. T. in fin. Bibl. vulg. edit. Sixt. V. et Clemen. VIII. Venet. 1616. Catharin. opusc. de Script. Canon. Stapleton de Autor. S. Script. lib. ii. c. iv. sect. 14. and Preface to the second book of Esdras, which was written or interpolated, after the publication of the New Testament.*

establish the authority of the apocryphal books, which might be referred to, as were other books by the sacred writers, without any design to confer on them a character of divine authority ⁹.

It is certain, that long after the time of our Saviour, the Hebrew canon consisted but of twenty-two books¹; and that at this day the Jews adhere to the same list, though by separating books formerly united, they appear to increase the number; and it is not reasonable, or consistent with authentic accounts, to suppose that at any time before or after Christ, the canon which the Jews so religiously respected, should have been altered by them. It is not probable that they should have admitted any addition after the death of Simon the Just, who was the last of the great Synagogue; or that if such addition had been allowed, they should have expunged these writings which contain nothing so favourable to Christianity, as the prophetic books which they have suffered to continue inviolate. Had the books been erased before the time of Christ, the sacrilege must have excited his censures; and since the establishment of the Gospel, any endeavour to deface the canon must have been detected and exposed.

These apocryphal books did not constitute any

⁹ 2 Tim. iii. 8. Heb. xii. 21. Jude, ver. 14. See also Origen. *Prol. in Cant.* p. 32. 36. *Sect. B.* tom. iii.

¹ Joseph. *cont. Apion.* lib. i. § viii. Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. c. ix. R. Asarias in *Meor Enaim*, p. 29. 141. 169. 175. R. Gedaliah Ben-Jechajah in *Shalshesh Haccabbalah.* p. 68. 99. 104. R. Abrah. Zachus in *Juchasin*, p. 136. 138. R. David. Gantz in *Tsemach David*, part ii. p. 10. R. Menasse Ben Israel *de Creatione*, Prob. x. p. 45. as cited by Grabe. *Prolegom.* cap. i. prop. xxiv. tom. ii.

part of the Septuagint version of the scriptures, as set forth by the translators under Ptolemy. It is supposed, however, that many of them were received by the Jewish synagogue established at Alexandria, which possibly might have derived its origin from the period of that version². From the Hellenistic Jews they were probably accepted by the Christian church; but by whomsoever, and at whatever time they were communicated, it is certain that they were not received as strictly canonical, or enrolled among the productions of the inspired writers as sacred, though sometimes interspersed with them, being marked in that case as in Jerom's versions, with intimations that they were not canonical; since they were not in the earlier catalogues³; and were excluded from the sacred list by the Fathers of the Greek and Latin Church, who flourished during the first four centuries⁴; though often cited by

² Grabii Septuagint. Proleg. ad Lib. Hist. c. i. prop. 24. tom. ii.

³ Constit. Apost. lib. ii. c. lvii. Canon. Apost. Can. ult. The present copies of the canons of the apostles, which include the three books of Maccabees, are evidently corrupted, the canons having formerly corresponded with the canon of the Council of Laodicea. Vid. Zonar. in Concil. Laodic. Can. 59. p. 361. edit. 1618. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. xxvi. Cosin's Scholast. Hist. ch. iv. sect. 45.

⁴ Dionys. Hierarch. Eccles. c. iii. Melito, ap. Euseb. lib. iv. c. xxvi. Origen. ap. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. vi. c. xxv. Basil in Orig. Philocal. c. iii. Ruffin. vers. Euseb. lib. vi. Tertul. advers. Marcion. Carmen. line 198, 199. who probably by reckoning Ruth and Lamentations separately, makes the number twenty-four. Athan. Epist. 39. ad Rufinum, p. 38. tom. 2. Athan. Synops. Hilar. Prol. in Lib. Psalm. p. 10. edit. Paris. Cyril. Catech. iv. c. xxxv. p. 68. edit. Par. 1720. Epiphan. Hæres. 8. de Epicur. p. 19. tom. 1. et Hæres. 76. cont. Anomæos, p. 941. et de Pond. et Mensur. Gregor. Nazianz. de ver. et german. Scriptur. Libr. tom.

them as valuable and instructive works, and sometimes even as divine, and as scripture in a loose and popular sense⁵. In the language of the primitive church they were styled ecclesiastical⁶, as contradistinguished from those infallible works which were canonized as unquestionably inspired, and also from those erroneous and pernicious writings which were stigmatized and proscribed as apocryphal.

The ecclesiastical books, (under which division were contained other productions besides those now termed apocryphal, as the Shepherd of Hermas⁷, the doctrine of the Apostles⁸, and the first epistle of Clement,) though considered as human works, and as subordinate to the sacred books, were nevertheless approved and read by the church as capable of affording much instruction⁹. The Fathers quote them as pious and

ii. p. 98. edit. Par. 1630. Amphiloc. Epist. ad Seleucum, p. 131—3. edit. Paris. Chrysost. Homil. iv. in Genes. et Homil. 8. in Epist. ad Hebræ. Hieron. Præfat. in Lib. Solomon, p. 939. edit. Paris, 1693. and Proœm. in Esdras, et in Paralip. Cosin's Scho. Hist. Canon. vi. § 73. Ruffin. Symbol. Apost. sect. 35, 36.

⁵ Origen cites Tobit and the Maccabees as scripture. Origen in Numeros, Hom. 27. sect. 1. de Princip. lib. ii. c. iii. Homil. 3. in Cant. as he does likewise the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Book of Henoch, without believing them to be canonical in the strict sense of the word. So Eusebius quotes Josephus and Aristæus, as well as the Maccabees. Præp. Evang. lib. viii. c. ii. lib. x. c. vii. Thus, also, Epiphanius calls the apostolical constitutions divine. Hæres. 8. and 10. Can. lib. v. c. 5. Irenæus likewise enumerates among the Prophets, writers who were only partially and erroneously so considered. Lib. i. c. 30. P. iii. et Dissertationes Præviæ, p. 108.

⁶ Ruffin. in Symbolum.

⁷ Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. 3.

⁸ This book was probably the work now called the apostolical canons. Athan. Epist. xxxix. tom. ii. p. 38. edit. Par. 1627.

⁹ Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. xxii.

venerable books, and as deservedly holden in great estimation: they speak of them in high and hyperbolic terms, as sacred, as bearing some resemblance to the inspired writings, but not as certainly inspired, or as of sufficient authority in points of doctrine; for those passages which they are represented to cite from them as such, are cited in spurious or doubtful books, or from similar places in sacred writ. Abundant testimonies have been produced to prove that they were not received as canonical during the first four centuries; and they have never been generally admitted into the canon of the Greek church; nor were they judged canonical in the same degree as the Law and the Prophets, even in the western church, till the Council of Trent¹, against evidence, and, indeed, consistency², pronounced them so to be. In the first general council holden at Nice, A. D. 325, none of these books appear to have been admitted as canonical³ in any sense of that word; and they certainly were not received by the Council of Laodicea, which was holden about forty years afterwards, of which the canons were adopted into the code of the universal church⁴, (A. D.

¹ Collier, Pref. Second Part of Eccles. Hist.

² Cosin's Scholast. Hist. ch. vii. sect. 82. Compare also p. 510. line 7. of this work, with sect. 70.

³ Cosin's Scholas. ch. vi. sect. 54.

⁴ Concil. Calced. Can. 1. and Can. 163. [A. D. 451.] Concil. Constant. 6. in Trullo, Can. 2. [A. D. 681. and 691.] The last council confirmed also the council of Carthage which admitted the Apocrypha; but it must have confirmed that canon only as admitting them in a secondary sense, as it also confirmed that of Laodicea, which excluded them as not equal. Vid. Justin. Novel. 131. Justellus Præf. in Cod. Eccles. Universal.

451 and 691), and which acknowledged precisely the same books ⁵ that we receive.

In the fifth century, St. Augustin ⁶ and the Council of Carthage ⁷ appear to have admitted (chiefly in deference to popular opinion, and in compliance with that reverence which had arisen from use ⁸;) most of the apocryphal books ⁹ as canonical; meaning, however, canonical

⁵ The Greek copies of this council reckon Baruch, the Lamentations, and the Epistle, as composing one canonical book with Jeremiah; and Athanasius and Cyril have been supposed to have received Baruch as canonical. But Baruch is mentioned in the catalogues referred to, not probably as the apocryphal book, but for a more full description of Jeremiah's work, in which Baruch is often mentioned, and in the writing of which he was employed; and the epistle may mean that contained in the twenty-ninth chapter of Jeremiah's book. Vid. Cosin's Schol. Hist. ch. vi. sect. 61, and Preface to Baruch.

⁶ August. contra Gaudentium Donatist. Episc. lib. i. c. xxxi. p. 445. edit. Antwerp. 1700. Epist. 61. ad Dulcit. Vid. also de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xxxvi. St. Augustin, speaking of the books of Macabees, says that they were received as canonical, not by the Jews, but by the church "propter quorundam martyrum passionem vehementes atque mirabiles, qui antequam Christus venisset in carnem usque ad mortem pro Dei lege certaverunt."

⁷ The forty-seventh canon, in which those books are consecrated, is erroneously attributed to the third council of Carthage, which, as the title says, assembled in 397; for it must have belonged to a later council holden during the time of Boniface, to whom it is referred; and it corresponds nearly with a canon framed by an African council, holden under the consulate of Honorius XII. and Theodosius VIII. in 419. Vid. Codex. Canon. Eccles. African. Can. 24. et Binii, et Justelli, not. in Concil. Carthag. 3. Can. 47, 48.

⁸ August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xxxvi. et lib. xv. c. xxiii. Epist. 9. and 10. ad Hieron. "Quia a patribus," (says the canon) "ista accepimus in ecclesia legenda." Vid. Cosin's Scholast. Hist. ch. vii. sect. 82. not. See Concil. Roman. A. D. 494.

⁹ Neither Augustin, nor the canon attributed to this council, enu-

in a secondary sense ; as useful to be read ; and still with expressed or implied distinction from those sacred and inspired books which were established on the sanction of the Jewish canon, and on the testimony of our Saviour and his apostles. After this time, other Fathers¹ and Councils² seem occasionally to have considered these books as canonical, and inferior only to the sacred writings ; but always with distinction, and with express declarations of their inferiority when that question was strictly agitated³ ; till at length the Council of Trent, notwithstanding the testimony of all Jewish antiquity, and contrary to the sense of the primitive church, thought fit to pronounce them all, (except the prayer of Manasseh, and the third and fourth books of Esdras⁴,) together with the unwritten traditions relative to faith and manners, as strictly and in every respect canonical, and of the same authority as those undisputed books which had been copied from the Jewish into the Christian canon, and received the at-

merate the fourth (that is, the second) book of Esdras, Baruch, or the Prayer of Manasseh. Vid. Justellus in *Notis ad Can.* xxiv.

¹ See also the suspected epistle of Innocent I. *ad Exuper.* and the decree attributed to Gelasius, *ad omnes Episc. in Can. Vet. Eccles. Rom. edit. Par. 1609.* Isidor. *Orig. lib. vi. c. i. et Procem. Sap. et Ecclus.*

² Sum. Caranzæ in *Decret. 7. Concil. Florent. (A.D. 1439.)* The council of Florence was not properly œcumenical ; the canon which represents the apocryphal books as inspired, is probably a forgery, as it is only in the epitomes. Cosin's *Scholast. Hist. ch. xvi. § 159.*

³ Cosin's canon of Scripture : where this is proved by numberless references to the authors who flourished from the first ages of the church, to the middle of the sixteenth century. Vid. also Raynold's *Censura Apocryphorum.*

⁴ *Bib. Sanct. Sixt. V. et Clement VIII. Jussa edita juxt. decret. Concil. Trid.*

testation of Christ and his apostles: of which the inspiration was manifested by the character of their composers, and proved by the accomplishment of the prophecies which they contain ⁵.

This canon was confirmed by severe anathemas ⁶ against all who should reject it. The Vulgate was published (without the prologues of Jerom), and from this time the Roman Catholics have endeavoured to maintain the canonical authority of these books, though their most strenuous advocates are obliged to allow that they were not received into the canon of Ezra. They are compelled to yield a superiority as to external sanctions, to those uncontroverted books which are exclusively canonized in the earliest and most authentic catalogues of the Christian church ⁷; and labour to defend the decision of the Council of Trent, as to the apocryphal writings, by appealing to the authority of preceding councils, of which the canons were never generally received, or which admitted the contested books as canonical only in a subordinate and inferior sense. It is, therefore, upon the most just and tenable grounds that our church has framed her sixth article, where, in agreement with all Protestant churches, she adheres in her catalogue to those writings of which there "was never any doubt in the church;" and, in

⁵ "Omnes Libros, &c. pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia suscipit et veneratur." Concil. Trident. Sess. 4.

⁶ "Siquis autem libros ipsos integros cum omnibus suis partibus, &c. pro sacris et canonicis non susceperit, &c. Anathema sit." Vid. Concil. Trid. Sess. 4. et in Bulla P. Pii IV. sup. form. Juram. Profess. fid.

⁷ Sixt. Senens. Bib. Sanct. lib. i. Bellarm. de Verb. Dei, lib. i. c. x. p. 31.

conformity to the doctrine of the patriarchal churches⁸, as recorded by Cyril, Athanasius, Anastasius, and Gregory Nazianzen, rejects those books which are styled apocryphal in our Bibles, though she reads them, as, Jerom observes, did the Western church⁹, “for example of life, and instruction of manners.”

It must indeed be confessed, that notwithstanding certain passages of exceptionable tendency, and some relations of improbable circumstances, these books are entitled to great respect; as written by persons, who being intimately conversant with the Scriptures, had, as it were, imbibed their spirit, and caught their pious enthusiasm. Whoever reads them with attention, must be highly gratified by the splendid sentiments, and sublime descriptions which they contain. They sometimes, likewise, present us with passages borrowed from the sacred writings, and with the finest imitations of inspired eloquence; they include besides, it may be, some scattered fragments of Divine wisdom, and some traditional precepts derived from men enlightened by a prophetic spirit. They occasionally illustrate the accomplishment of prophecy; and throw light on the Scriptures by explaining the manners, sentiments, and history of the Jews. They afford also some information as to a period of which we have but few traces, and of which records even of a subordinate character are valuable, and seem to have been preserved for important purposes. The rejection of their claims to be received into the sacred canon, serves to show what caution was observed with respect to the admission of

⁸ Those of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople.

⁹ Hieron. Præfat. in Lib. Solom. ad Chrom. et Heliod. p. 938.

books into it. They bear then an indirect and impartial testimony to the truth of our religion; they are venerable for their antiquity; recommended by long established approbation, and in some measure consecrated to our regard by the commendations of the Church, and by being annexed to the inspired writings. Where they are defective, they may have been perhaps injured or corrupted by subsequent additions, as not being watched over with such religious care as were the sacred books. It may be added also, that many of those passages which appear to have a bad tendency, are capable of a good construction, and that, perhaps, some blemishes may be attributed to our translators, who in rendering the apocryphal books have been accused of much carelessness¹. They who are disposed to profit by their perusal, will find it not difficult by the light of the inspired books, to discriminate and select what is excellent and consistent with truth, and to reject such objectionable particulars as prove them to be the production of unassisted, and sometimes of mistaken men.

¹ The learned Du Port, then Greek Professor at Cambridge, was among the seven able persons employed under King James; but though his work has much merit, it is very often faulty and imperfect. The translators seem to have attributed too little consequence to the apocryphal books, though Dr. Geddes affirms, that the apocryphal books are translated better than the rest of the Bible, and attributes the circumstance to the translators not having been cramped by the fathers of the Masora.

[The Apocrypha have lately been translated into Hebrew.]

OF THE

FIRST BOOK OF ESDRAS.

THE First Book of Esdras, or Ezra ¹, is generally supposed to have been the work of some Hellenistic Jew. It is uncertain at what time it was composed; the particulars contained in it are related by Josephus: it was, therefore, probably written before the time of that historian. The book, though in its style it has much of the Hebrew idiom, was, it is believed, never extant in that language ²; at least it certainly was not admitted into the Hebrew canon. It was annexed, however, to some copies of the Septuagint ³, and placed in some manuscripts before the book of Ezra ⁴, that of Nehemiah being inserted between the two. Standing in

¹ The word is written עזרא in the Hebrew, and Ἐζρας in the Greek.

² Isidor. Orig. lib. vi. c. ii.

³ It was not in any of the Greek manuscripts used by the editors of the Complutensian Bible; but it was found in some Greek copies when Aldus was printing his Septuagint at Venice. It was published from a manuscript in the library of St. Victor, at Paris, by Robert Stephens, as also in the London Polyglot. There is a Syriac version of this Book.

⁴ Luc. Brug. in 3 Esdras.

that order, it was called the First Book of Ezra; and the authentic work of Ezra, together with that of Nehemiah, which seems to have been joined with it, was called the Second Book of Ezra ⁵. This arrangement was probably adopted in consideration of the chronological order of the events described in the books respectively ⁶. In some Greek editions it is, however, placed with more propriety as to its character, between the Song of the Three Children, and the Wisdom of Solomon ⁷.

As this book was inserted in some copies of the Septuagint, it was read in the Greek church; and the council of Carthage, which canonized the vulgar translation made from the Septuagint ⁸, appears to have admitted it together with other spurious productions, as canonical ⁹, in that extended acceptation of the word which implied only, worthy to be read. St. Augustin, considers it as an historical rather than a prophetic work, attributed to Ezra. He suggests, however, that it might be thought even to contain a prophetic passage, if by truth ¹ described as conquering all things, is

⁵ Bellarm. de Verb. Dei, lib. i. c. xx. § ad D.

⁶ It stands in the same order in the Alexandrian code, and in the Syriac version.

⁷ As in the Frankfort edition of 1597, and in that of Basil of 1518. The Latin manuscripts vary. In some it is placed after Nehemiah, and called the Second Book of Ezra. Vid. Calmet Dissert. sur le Troisième Livre d'Esdras.

⁸ August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xliii. De Doctrin. Christian. lib. ii. c. xv. p. 21.

⁹ See the forty-seventh canon improperly assigned to the third Council of Carthage, but belonging to one holden in a later period. Vid. Preface to Apocrypha, p. 508, note ⁵.

¹ Chap. iv. 38. et August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xxxvi.

to be understood Christ. The book is also cited by others of the Fathers as a work entitled, the First Book of Esdras: as ascribed to him, and as a respectable work²; but never as of equal authority with the canonical books³. St. Jerom, without scruple, pronounced this and the following books to be visionary and spurious⁴; and it was rejected even by the Council of Trent, though it was suffered to continue in the printed editions as the second or third book of Ezra, till the publication of the Bible by Sixtus the Fifth, when it was placed apart from the canonical books⁵; and notwithstanding Genebrard⁶ still maintained its authenticity, the Romanists in general consider it as apocryphal. It certainly could not have been written by Ezra, whose authentic work it, indeed, contradicts in many particulars; since it has no pretensions to be revered as the production of an inspired person, although great part of it be extracted from the sacred writings.

The name of Ezra was at all times particularly revered by the Jews, who were accustomed in honour of his memory to remark, that he was worthy that the Law should have been given by his hands unto Israel,

² Cyprian Ep. 74. ad Pompeium, p. 141. edit. Par. 1726. Basil. Epist. ad Chilon. p. 129. tom. 3. edit. Par. 1730. Athan. Orat. iii. cont. Arian. p. 391. edit. Par. 1627. August. de Doct. Christ. lib. ii. c. viii.

³ Joh. Driedo, in Cat. Script. lib. i. c. iv. ad Diffic. 4.

⁴ Hieron. Epist. ad Domnion. et Rogatian. "Nec Apocryphorum tertii et quarti (Esdrae) Somniis delectetur," says Jerom.

⁵ In some old copies of the Latin Bibles, this and the succeeding book, as also the Prayer of Manasseh, were marked with *non legitur*: as an intimation that they were not to be publicly read in the church.

⁶ Genebrard in Chron. ad an. 3730. p. 95, 96.

if Moses had not been before him. In consequence of this reputation, numberless suspected works were published at different times under his name; and however they might at first, whether produced before or after Christ, have borne the palpable marks of forgery, they were yet received by the credulous and unlearned. If the boldness of the imposture provoked opposition, this was soon wearied and forgotten; and the books gradually rose into reputation under the sanction of a great name⁷.

The First Book of Esdras includes a period of about ninety years. The short historical sketch of the time which intervened between the celebration of the Passover by Josiah, and the captivity of the Jews, as imparted in the first chapter of this book, is taken chiefly from the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth chapters of the Second Book of Chronicles. The strange but lively story of the three competitors for the favour of Darius, which appears to have been introduced to recommend and embellish the character of Zerubbabel⁸, might have been founded on some popular traditions, as it is related, though with some difference, in the account by Josephus; but it is certainly fabulous in

⁷ Besides the books ascribed to Ezra in our Bibles, and other writings, before mentioned, (vid. Preface to Ezra,) Picus Mirandula professes to have read the Cabala of Esdras, written in seventy books, and informs us, that they contained many mysteries relating to Christianity. Sixtus the Fourth is said to have projected a translation of them, but only three were finished at his death: the learned dispute concerning the character, and even the existence of these books. Vid. Mirand. Apol. p. 82. 2 Esd. xiv. 46. Fabricii Codex Pseudepig. Petr. Crinit. de Honest. Discip. lib. xxv. c. iii. Sixt. Senens. Bib. Sanct. lib. ii. Epiphan. de Pond. et Mens. § 10.

⁸ Chap. iii. iv. v.

most of its particulars, and could not concern Zerubbabel, who at the period assigned was at Jerusalem⁹.

The rest of the work, which is chiefly compiled from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, is disfigured by many improbable and contradictory additions, and by circumstances which appear to have been designedly introduced in order to disguise and vary the relation¹. It contains, perhaps, nothing exceptionable with respect to doctrine or precept; but its accounts are so incorporated with falsehood, that the compilers of our Liturgy have not appointed any selections from it to be read in the service of the church. Many particulars, indeed, interspersed through the book, and too numerous here to be produced², are utterly inconsistent with probability, chronology, and the relations of Scripture. From fictitious circumstances, however, some instruction may be drawn, though we cannot but regret that the author of the fine encomium on truth³, should have so departed from its principles as to fabricate a work under the assumed character of an inspired writer.

⁹ Ezra ii. 2. Josephus erroneously says, and perhaps on the authority of this book, that Zerubbabel returned from Jerusalem to Darius. Vid. de Antiq. lib. xi. c. iii. p. 472.

¹ Comp. chap. ii. 1—5. with Ezra i. 1. 2. Chap. iv. 48. with Ezra ii. 7. Chap. iv. 43. 46. with Ezra vi. 1. Chap. iv. 44. 57. with chap. vi. 18, 19. and Ezra i. 7—11. Chap. v. 40. with Nehem. viii. 9. Chap. v. 47, 48. with Ezra iii. 1—3. viii. 17. with Ezra i. 11, &c.

² Calmet et Arnald.

³ Chap. iv. 38—40. The learned Thorndyke by truth, here spoken of, understands the truth which God by his law had declared to his people, and supposes Zerubbabel to have intended to encourage the King to protect it by countenancing the building of the temple. Vid. Thorndyke's Epilogue, ch. xxxiv. p. 212.

OF THE

SECOND BOOK OF ESDRAS.

SOME writers have conceived that this work was composed by the same person that assumed the character of Ezra in the preceding book ; but though it be equally uncertain by whom and at what period each book was produced, there is reason to think that they were not both derived from one person, since they differ in style, and have no connexion or agreement with each other. Each author, however, has borrowed the same title ; and each has inserted a genealogy in the character of Ezra ; with some difference, indeed, in the accounts, but both with variation from the lineage furnished by the inspired writer in his authentic book ¹.

The Second Book of Esdras is not now to be found in any Hebrew or Greek manuscripts. Some suppose it to have been originally written in the Hebrew and

¹ The accounts in 1 Esdras viii. 1, 2. and in 2 Esdras i. 1—3. differ from each other, and both disagree with the genealogy inserted in Ezra vii. 1. They were, however, all designed for the same person, as is evident from the general agreement of the six first names ; and probably the variations arise only from accidental corruptions, or from different modes of calculation ; indeed, the author of the Second Book of Esdras enumerates three names more in this genealogy than do the authors of the preceding books.

Chaldee², and thence to have been translated into Greek and Latin. It is now extant in a few Latin copies,³ and in an Arabic version⁴. A translation has also been made from the Ethiopic language by the Archbishop of Cashel, and published at Oxford in 1820. This begins at the third chapter, and differs in many respects from the Latin and Arabic copies, as they differ from each other, though the Arabic copy also omits the first two chapters, and two at the end. It appears to be a work not composed before the fourth century. It is generally maintained that it could not have been the genuine production of Ezra, as it seems to bear some intrinsic marks of having been composed after his time, and, indeed, after the period at which the prophetic spirit is reputed to have ceased among the Jews⁵; notwithstanding, also, the fine spirit of

² Fabricius *Codex Pseud. Vet. Test.* vol. iii. p. 189. and Lee's *Dissert.* vol. i. p. 153.

³ Calmet states that it was first printed in the Latin edition of Nuremberg, published in 1521. *Dissert. sur le Quatrième Livre d'Esdras*, note 1.

⁴ In the Arabic version it is called the First Book of Esdras. This version differs much from the Latin copies, and has many interpolations; one particularly concerning the intermediate state of the soul.

⁵ Ch. i. 39, 40. The author, in the last of these verses, speaks of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; though the former did not, probably, flourish as prophets till after the return from the captivity, and Malachi not till above 100 years after the decree of Cyrus. Ezra, indeed, if he had been the author of the book, might, as speaking prophetically, have mentioned, even in the captivity, these prophets by name; but besides other reasons that tend to prove that the work was written after his time, it may be remarked, that the Prophets are here enumerated, not according to the order of the Hebrew canon, but according to that of the Septuagint. *Vid.* also, ch. xv. 46, where Asia is mentioned, a name probably not known in the time of Ezra.

piety that pervades the work, and the author's confident assumption of the prophetic character, his pretensions to inspiration have not been admitted. It is not, indeed, probable that an inspired writer would have claimed a name to which he was not entitled; or have interspersed in his work those extravagant conceits and apparent inconsistencies which occasionally disfigure and degrade this production. The book, it is true, contains much sublime instruction; many animated exhortations to righteousness, and many sentiments not unworthy of the sacred source from whence they are related to have flowed. It represents Ezra as commanded to remonstrate with the people for their disobedience; and on their contempt of God's words, as addressing himself to the heathen, whom he enjoins to prepare for that "everlasting light" which should shine upon them. It describes the Prophet as pleading with submissive piety to remove the afflictions of his captive countrymen; as anxiously inquiring why the chosen people of the Almighty should suffer severer punishments for their sins than the heathen for whom they were seemingly rejected⁶; as lamenting the effects of entailed corruption⁷; as bewailing the evil propensities and condition of men, of whom a few only appear to be marked out and distinguished as objects of Divine favour⁸. He is said to have been honoured with visions and Divine communications in answer to those inquiries. The boasted revelations are described in a lofty and prophetic style: in a manner similar to that

⁶ Ch. iii. 28. iv. 23—31.

⁷ Ch. iii. 20—22. iv. 30—32. vii. 48. The author speaks, indeed, of the extent of Adam's transgression with a clearness that argues an acquaintance with the evangelical account of its effects.

⁸ Chap. iv. 12. vii. 4—54. ix. 15, 16.

adopted by Daniel, Ezekiel, and St. John. They discountenance, with becoming dignity, the presumptuous curiosity and complaints of man⁹; contain very elevated descriptions of God's attributes¹; and rest the equity of his proceedings on the projected decisions of a future judgment. They impart consolatory assurances of returning favour, and represent, in an interesting vision, Jerusalem re-established on its foundations². The angel, likewise, in these pretended visions, reveals many striking prophecies relative to the Messiah³; the destruction of the Roman empire⁴; and the fate of Egypt; of Babylon⁵, and of other nations, mixed with

⁹ Ch. iv. 5—11. comp. with John iii. 12.

¹ Ch. vii. 62—70. viii. 20—23. 39. xvi. 54—63.

² Chap. ix. x. 27, &c.

³ Chap. ii. 34—48. et infra, p. 527, and note.

⁴ Chap. xi. xii. The prophecies relative to the eagle might have been written by an uninspired writer acquainted with Daniel's book, either before or after Christ. The prophecy concerning the lion, which denounced destruction to the eagle, is said by the Arabic translator, to be "a prophecy of the Lord the Messiah." Vid. ch. xi. 37.

⁵ Chap. xv. xvi. In some ancient copies these two last chapters seem to constitute a distinct book, called the Fifth book of Esdras, and divided into seven chapters. Lee thinks that they have all the characters of antiquity, and resemble the prophetic style. They speak of the destruction of nations, and of some general troubles from which the faithful only should be delivered. The twenty-ninth and following verses of the fifteenth chapter, have been thought to relate to the victories of the Saracens; and Lee, by dragons, understands those who lived in dens and caverns of the earth. Vid. Lee p. 45. and 156, with note annexed to the Fifth Book of Esdras. None of the pretended prophecies, however, in this book, are so clear and original (except those relating to the Messiah, which were probably written after the time of Christ) that they might not have been framed by an uninspired writer conversant with the prophetic books.

circumstances of very obscure and uncertain interpretation ⁶.

So far there appears nothing incompatible with the character of Ezra; and we should be inclined to consider the work as his production, or at least as a compilation of some fragments written by him, were it not for the deficiency of external sanctions; and for the intermixture of particulars seemingly inconsistent with the character and period of that inspired writer. The author's pretensions indeed, to inspiration, as well as to the name of Ezra, are destroyed by many false and absurd particulars ⁷, which are so incorporated with the work, that they cannot always be considered as subsequent interpolations. The book was never admitted into the Hebrew canon; and there is no sufficient authority to prove that it was ever extant in the Hebrew language ⁸. Its pretended prophecies are not produced in evidence by Christian writers, striking as such testimony must have been, if genuine; and the book was never publicly or generally acknowledged either in

⁶ Chap. v. 1—13. vi. 7—28.

⁷ Chap. iv. 44, 45. viii. 17. compare with Ezra i. 11. v. 5. vii. 11. xiii. 46, 47. Basnage, Hist. of the Jews, b. vii. ch. ii. Chap. xiv. 10—12. St. Cyprian and others, who believed that the end of the world was near at hand in their time, are supposed to have derived the notion from this and other passages in this book. Vid. Cyprian. ad Demetrian. p. 216. edit. Paris, 1726. George Hakewill on Providence, London, 1627. fol. Freinshem. Orat. vii. and ix. See other idle tales in chap. xiv. 21—44.

⁸ Lee supposes that Picus Mirandula, and Leo Judæus had seen, and relates, that Petrus Galatinus had heard of an Hebrew copy; as also, that Scaliger had boasted of having *the book or books* of Esdras in the Syriac; but the presumptions of its having ever existed in the Hebrew are but slender. Lee's Dissertat. p. 152 and 153.

the Greek or Latin church⁹; nor was it ever inserted in the sacred catalogue, by either Councils or Fathers; but is expressly represented as apocryphal by St. Jerom, who describes it as rejected by the church¹.

The many wild and preposterous fancies with which the work abounds, seem to prove that it was the production of a Rabbinical Jew². The learned Lee is inclined to think that it was written or compiled by an Egyptian Jew before the time of Christ; and it has been observed in support of this opinion, that it is cited or referred to as a Jewish book by very ancient writers³; as farther that it may be supposed to treat of that traditional and mysterious knowledge which was said to have been derived as an oral explication of the Law from Moses; and which was taught in the Alexandrian school of the Jews. He observes, that in many particulars it resembles other apocryphal books, undoubtedly written before the time of our

⁹ Bib. Sac. Sixt. V. and Clement. VIII.

¹ Hieron. Epist. 38. p. 283. tom. 4. et Præfat. in Esdram. In answer to Vigilantius, who had produced some passages from this book, he says, "Tu vigilans dormis, et dormiens scribis: et proponis mihi Librum Apocryphum qui sub nomine Esdræ, a te et similibus tui legitur." Vid. also Athan. Synop. de Lib. Esd. Wolfius Bib. Heb. tom. i. n. 1768. p. 941. and tom. ii. p. 194. 196. 209. et lib. viii. cap. xlv. edit. Par. 1627.

² Chap. iii. 6. 19. v. 5. 52—55. vi. 42. 44. 49—52. 55. Raynold's Prælect. 27. See also chap. vi. 55—58.

³ Tertull. cont. Marcion. Carm. lib. iv. line 198, 199. Clemens Alex. Strom. lib. iii. p. 556. et Euseb. lib. vi. c. xxv. Ambrose de Bono Mortis, c. x. § 45. p. 407. c. xi. p. 410. tom. i. edit. Paris, 1686. et lib. ii. in Lucam, p. 1292. St. Ambrose cites ch. vii. 32. as scripture, and he professes to cite on this occasion from Ezra; in order to show that the heathens had drawn their best maxims from our books.

Saviour⁴; and that there is some ground for supposing that the book of Enoch⁵, and that of the Shepherd of Hermas⁶, might have proceeded from the same author as the present work.

On a supposition that this work was written before the period of Christ, we must admit that those particulars which appear to be prophetic of circumstances relative to the Messiah and his kingdom, were collected from an acquaintance with the inspired books

⁴ As the two last chapters of Tobit, and likewise the books of Baruch and Wisdom. The book bears, likewise, some resemblance to passages in the ancient Targums, as those of Jonathan and Onkelos. See Kidder's *Demonstration of the Messiah*, and Allix's *Defence of the Unity and Distinction of the Divine Nature*.

⁵ It has been imagined that this book is cited by Jude, verse 14. if not by St. Peter, and that an interpretation is borrowed from it by the Targumist Jonathan; but, as Fabricius observes, Jude does not cite any book, but says only Enoch prophesied. The book of Enoch is supposed to have existed in the age of Alexander Polyhistor, about 100 years before the time of Christ. What is now so called is a forgery, for Fabricius informs us, that Postilus mentioned a book under that name at Rome, written in the Abyssinian tongue, and said to have been brought from Ethiopia. Mr. Bruce, when in Abyssinia, procured a copy of a book under this title, which he presented to the King of France for the Royal Library at Paris. Dr. Woide who had studied the Ethiopic and Coptic languages, went to Paris several times on purpose to examine this manuscript; but on conversing with the late Granville Sharp, and considering the account of Fabricius, Dr. Woide was convinced that this manuscript was only another copy of the same spurious work. For this information, as well as for some corrections, the author is indebted to that eminent scholar and most valuable man, the late Granville Sharp.

⁶ The visions of Hermas much resemble those of Esdras in many striking particulars. They are thought to have been written about seventy-five years after the vulgar æra. The book of Hermas was highly esteemed in the Greek, and hardly known in the Western church, though now extant only in Latin. Vid. Lee's *Dis.* p. 138.

of the Old Testament; or that the work had been interpolated by some writer who lived under the Gospel dispensation⁷. But it exhibits, in every part, such a manifest resemblance to the doctrines, sentiments, and expressions, of the evangelical writers; and corresponds so much with passages of the New Testament as to particulars interwoven in the contexture of the book; that we must suppose it to have been written after the publication of the Gospel, unless we admit that the evangelical writers have borrowed more from this apocryphal book, than from any canonical book of the Old Testament, since in none except in the Psalms, can we discover such frequent coincidence of thought and expression⁸. The author also treats so clearly of

⁷ Lee seems to insinuate that the book might have been corrupted by the Cerinthians, or even by Cerinthus himself, who in his religious system, combined with the doctrines of Christ the opinions of the Jews, and the errors of the Gnostics. Some, indeed, have imagined, that this book is the very apocalypse of that heretic referred to by the ancients, as it seems to contain some notions favourable to the Cerinthian heresy; and Cerinthus is related to have written a kind of apocalypse upon the model of St. John's Revelation. Vid. Lee's Dis. p. 87. Dr. Allix supposed that the second book of Esdras was the production of a Jew who had adopted the opinions of Montanus, a rigid and enthusiastic sectary of the second century, who predicted calamities and destruction to the Roman empire. Vid. Allix de Usu et Præstant. Num. Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. cent. 2. part ii. c. 5. § 23, 24.

Com. ch. i. 30. with Matt. xxiii. 37. Ch. i. 32. with Matt. xxiii. 34. and Luke xi. 49, 50. where the Evangelist refers probably to some prophecy now lost. Ch. i. 33. with Luke xiii. 35, &c. Ch. i. 37. with John xx. 29. Ch. ii. 8, 9. with Mark vi. 11, &c. Ch. ii. 11. with Luke xvi. 9. Ch. ii. 12. with Rev. ii. 7. xxii. 2. 14. Ch. ii. 13. with Matt. vii. 7. and Matt. xxiv. 22. and ch. xxv. 34. and Mark xiii. 37. Ch. ii. 16. with John v. 28, 29. Ch. ii. 26. with John xvii. 12. Ch. iv. 21. with John iii. 31, 32. Ch.

particulars brought to light by the Gospel dispensation; portrays so expressively and characteristically our Saviour, who is imaged out as “the Son of God, exalted on Mount Sion⁹, crowning and giving palms to them who having confessed the name of God, had put off the mortal clothing;” he describes likewise so fully the character and comprehensive design of Christ’s kingdom¹, and the death of our Saviour²; and speaks so distinctly of a resurrection and future judgment³, that he must have been enlightened by divine inspira-

iv. 28. with Matt. xiii. 30. Ch. iv. 30. with Matt. xiii. 30. 39. Ch. iv. 31, 32. with Mark iv. 28, 29. Ch. v. 1. with Luke xviii. 8. Ch. v. 2. with Matt. xxiv. 12. Ch. v. 2, 3. with John xv. 1. Ch. vi. 23. with Matt. xxiv. 31. Ch. vi. 24. with Luke xii. 53. Ch. vi. 25. with Matt. xxiv. 13. Ch. vi. 26. with Matt. xiv. 28. Ch. vii. 7. with Matt. vii. 14. Ch. vii. 55. with Matt. xiii. 43. Ch. viii. 3. with Matt. xx. 16. and vii. 14. Ch. viii. 22. with John xvii. 17. Ch. ix. 3. Matt. xxiv. 6, 7. xiii. 32. with John vii. 19. Ch. ix. 37. with Matt. v. 18. Ch. xv. 4. with John iii. 36. and viii. 24. Ch. xvi. 18. with Matt. xxiv. 8. Ch. xvi. 53, 54. 76. with Luke xvi. 15. Ch. iii. 11. with 1 Pet. iii. 20. Ch. vii. 64. with 2 Pet. iii. 15. Ch. viii. 39. with 1 Pet. i. 17. Ch. viii. 59. with 2 Pet. iii. 9. Ch. ix. 15. with 1 Pet. iv. 18. and Matt. vii. 13. Ch. ii. 41. with 2 Thess. ii. 13. Comp. also ch. v. 4. with Rev. vii. 10. 12. See also, the book of Revelation passim, and many other collated references in Lee, p. 124—127.

⁹ Ch. ii. 34—36. comp. with John x. 11—14. and Matt. xi. 29. Esd. ii. 42—48. comp. with Matt. x. 32. xvi. 16. Luke i. 35. 1 Pet. v. 4. and 1 Cor. xv. 53. Esd. vii. 28. comp. with Luke i. 31. Esd. xiii. 1—38. comp. with Matt. xxiv. 30. and xxv. 31. Vid. also, Esd. xiv. 9. xv. 6.

¹ Ch. ii. 34—41. Ch. ii. 18, 19. where, by the twelve trees and twelve fountains were designed, probably, the twelve apostles.

² Ch. vii. 29.

³ Ch. ii. 16. 23. 31. iv. 42. vi. 20—28. vii. 31—35. comp. with John v. 25. 29. and Matt. xvi. 27. and xxv. 31. Vid. also ch. vii. 42—45. 55. viii. 61. ix. 10—13. xiv. 35.

tion, if he lived previously to the promulgation of the Gospel doctrines.

That the book was written after the appearance of Christ, will be deemed farther probable if we consider the particulars of that passage in which the author declares, in the name of the Almighty, that “Jesus⁴, his Son, should be revealed with those that be with him; and that they that remain should rejoice within four hundred years; that after these years should his Son Christ die, and all men that have life;” for it is not probable that an uninspired writer, however conversant with the prophetic books, should have been able to etch out a prophecy so clear and descriptive.

There appears then to be reason, on a collective consideration of these circumstances, to suppose that the book, or at least that the greatest part of it, was produced after the promulgation of the Gospel, possibly by a converted Jew. The work is, however, of too mixed and mysterious a character to authorize any positive determination. It is a collection of pretended prophecies; cabalistical fancies; and allusions to evangelical particulars. Amidst spurious fabrications, and

⁴ Ch. vii. 28, 29. The name of Jesus is wanting in the Arabic Paraphrase and in the Ethiopic version (of which a translation was published by Dr. Laurence in 1821); but it must have been in the ancient manuscripts, as particularly in the Latin copies in the time of St. Ambrose, which was about 700 years prior to the supposed date of the Laudean manuscript. This name, though equivalent to the word Redeemer, is no where applied to the Messiah in the Old Testament. Vid. Matt. i. 21. The word Christ is synonymous with that of the Messiah, or the Anointed; which words are often used by the Prophets in predictions respecting our Saviour. Vid. 1 Sam. ii. 35. Psalm ii. 2. Dan. ix. 25. The seventy in these places translate *Meshiach*, by *Χριστός*.

passages transcribed from the Gospel, it may contain fragments of works written before the time of Christ ⁵; and many writers have considered it as a compilation of pieces, of which some, at least, may have been the genuine production of Ezra.

Among the various opinions that have been entertained concerning this book, some have imagined that it might have been composed soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, by a Christian writer; who, as was customary among the ancients, might have assumed a borrowed title, not with intention to impose on the world; but to exhibit under the name of Ezra, as that of a great doctor of the Law, a specimen of what might be said on the principles of the Jewish synagogue, concerning the more inward and spiritual religion that had been concealed from common observation under the veil of Moses; and that the author might design to develop the more secret wisdom of God in his government of the world, and of his church; with the more notable events relative to the introduction and establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah, in order to facilitate the reception of the Gospel and its mysteries.

It is probable, that the author's intention was to promote the success of Christianity; and Calmet has conjectured, that he lived during the time of some persecution of the Christians, whom he appears desirous of exciting to faith and fortitude ⁶. But however

⁵ Lee conceives the two first chapters to be an extrinsic work. He considers them as a fragment of some book held sacred among the Egyptian Jews, though not admitted into the canon. They are not in the Arabic version, nor in some of the most ancient Latin copies. Lee's Diss. p. 54.

Ch. ii. 44—47.

pious the design of the author, it will not apologize for the guilt of endeavouring to impose a spurious, for an inspired work on the world; and for the presumption of speaking in the name and with the authority of God. The work may, nevertheless, be admired as a production of the most curious and interesting character; as valuable for many devout and instructive sentiments, and for precepts modelled on the perfection of Christian morality⁷. It may be admired, likewise, notwithstanding the defects of translation, for the beauties of its composition; for its lively and elegant illustrations, and for that majestic eloquence which breaks forth through the disadvantages of a barbarous Latin translation. It contains passages of questionable tendency⁸. The Romish church, though it admit not its canonical authority, has adopted some passages from it into its offices⁹; and it is properly suffered to continue in our Bibles, as a profitable book if discreetly and cautiously used, but not as having any authority in point of doctrine. It may be observed, however, in vindication of the book, even in that respect, at least in one instance, that the Roman Catholics who have endeavoured to countenance the notions of purgatory by the authority of this writer, have perverted his words: for the passage in which he speaks, agreeably to the representation of St. John¹, of the souls of the righteous, as set apart in expectation of God's final judgment, does not make any mention of purification, or of their being placed in a state of expiatory punishment.

⁷ Ch. ii. 20—23. iv. 7.

⁸ Ch. viii. 32, 33.

⁹ 2 Esdras ii. 36, 37. Missa in Fer. post Pentecostem. Miss. Rom. p. 316.

¹ Chap. iv. 35—41. comp. with Rev. vi. 9—11.

Clemens Alexandrinus has quoted ² in his explication of Daniel's prophecy, a passage as from the Book of Esdras, which is no longer to be found in this or the preceding book ; if it ever existed in this, it must have tended still further to prove that the book was written after the appearance of Christ. The words of Clemens may be thus rendered : " For it is written in Esdras, and thus was Christ the King of the Jews ruler in Jerusalem, after the accomplishment of the seven weeks ; and in the sixty-two weeks all Judæa was in peace, and was without wars ; and the Lord our Christ, the most Holy, being come, and having fulfilled the vision and prophecy (Prophet), was anointed in the flesh, by the Spirit of his Father."

² Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. p. 394. edit. Potter.

OF THE

BOOK OF TOBIT.

THIS Book was probably written by, or at least compiled from the memoirs of Tobit and Tobias¹: whom Raphael, the angel, had commanded to record the events of their lives². The work appears to have been begun by Tobit; who in the Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac editions, speaks in the first person to the fourth chapter; and by whom other parts in the book, as the prayer in the thirteenth chapter, are said to have been composed: what he left unfinished was probably completed by his son; the two last verses of the book being afterwards added by some compiler³, who digested the materials into their present form.

It is uncertain, whether this work was originally written in the Hebrew or in the Chaldaic language⁴,

¹ The Greek calls the father *Τωβιτ* (Tobet) or *Τωβιτ* (Tobit) and the son *Τωβίας* (Tobias) in the Chaldee both are called *טוביה* (Tobija).

² Chap. xii. 20.

³ It is called *βιβλος τῶν λόγων*, “The Book of the Words” or of the acts of Tobit, ch. i. 1.

⁴ Origen, while he seems to speak of Tobit as Scripture, states it to be notorious, that the Jews did not use Tobit and Judith, nor even had them in their language among the apocryphal books. Vid. Homil. xxvii. in Numeros. Epist. ad African. tom. i. p. 26. edit. Paris, 1733. et de Oratione, p. 220. The names of the angels, and

with both of which Tobit and his family must have been well acquainted. The Hebrew copies published by Munster and Fagius, appear to be translations comparatively modern⁵; but as the book was extant in the Chaldaic language in the time of St. Jerom, it is possible that it was originally written in that language, though no Chaldaic copy be now extant. The most ancient copy that is known to exist, is a Greek version which was probably made by some Hellenistical Jew⁶, and before the time of Theodotion, as it is quoted by Polycarp⁷; from this our English translation, and probably the Syriac version was made: as also the Latin version, which was in use before the time of St. Jerom.

All the versions of this book vary so much from each other, that they must have suffered many corruptions. St. Jerom's Latin version especially, which he pro-

of the months, are of Chaldæan derivation; but these might have been equally used by a Jew, as the Chaldæan expressions and reckonings were generally adopted during and after the captivity of the Jews. Vid. Bereschit, Rabb. et Talmud. Hieron. Præfat. in Tob. Huet. Dem. Evan. Pro. 4. p. 169.

⁵ The Hebrew obtained by Fagius from Constantinople, and published by him, seems to have been translated from the Greek; that of Munster, which he professes to have found in Germany, was probably rendered chiefly from the Vulgate. They both, however, vary from the copies from which they are supposed to have been respectively translated. Huet was in possession of a Hebrew manuscript, which differed from both; and especially from that of Fagius. Vid. Fabric. Bib. Græc. Huet. prop. 4. p. 168. et Calmet. Pref. sur Tobie.

⁶ Hieron. Præf. in Tobiam. Whiston's Sac. Hist. vol. i.

⁷ Polycarp, Epist. ad Philip. § 10. This Greek translation of Tobit was composed, however, long after the period assigned to the history, for the sixth verse of the eighth chapter is transcribed almost *verbatim* from the Septuagint version of Gen. ii. 18.

fesses to have translated from the Chaldee, differs so much from the Greek, that it has been supposed to have been drawn from a more extended history of Tobit⁸. But if we consider that St. Jerom was at that time, by his own account, ignorant of the Chaldee, and that he executed the work by the assistance of a Jew in one day⁹, we may attribute many of the adventitious particulars to inaccuracy, and to the redundancies that must have resulted from verbal circumlocution. The Greek is probably most entitled to respect, and on that account it was preferred by the translators of our Bible¹; and, indeed, there are some mistakes in the Latin, which, if not rejected, would entirely destroy all the authority which the book might claim, and make it utterly inconsistent with the times to which it is assigned. This, however, is canonized by the church of Rome.

The book, if it ever existed in the Hebrew language, was certainly never in the Hebrew canon, and has no pretensions to be considered as the production of an inspired writer. It was probably composed after the closing of the canon; but, perhaps, before the time of our Saviour, though, as far as may be argued from the

⁸ Fabian Justiniani supposed that there must have been two originals; and Serrarius contends for three. But the varieties arise from corruptions in the copies. Vid. Justinian. Præf. in Tob. He mentions an Arabic version which corresponds much with the Vulgate, and which was probably made from it.

⁹ “Unius Diei laborem arripui, et quicquid ille mihi Hebraicis verbis expressit, hoc ego accito notario sermonibus Latinis exposui,” says St. Jerom, vid. Præf. in Tobiam. We are not, therefore, to look for accuracy in a translation so made.

¹ Coverdale's translation appears to have been made from that of St. Jerom, altered as in the Vulgate.

silence of Philo and Josephus, it does not seem to have been known to those historians, and it is not cited in the New Testament. It is not to be found in the most ancient catalogues of the canonical books, as furnished by Melito, Origen, and the council of Laodicea; and it may be added that Athanasius¹, Cyril of Jerusalem², Gregory Nazianzen³, Epiphanius⁴, Hilary⁵, and St. Jerom⁶, do not include it in the sacred code.

Though Tobit has no canonical authority, it is a book respectable for its antiquity and contents. In the Alexandrian manuscript, and in the best editions of the Septuagint⁷, it is placed among the hagiographical books; and it is cited from the Greek with respect by Polycarp⁸, Clemens Alexandrinus⁹, Chrysostom and other writers¹⁰ of considerable authority; and some Councils, as those of Carthage¹¹, Florence¹², and

¹ Athan. Epist. 39. et in Synop. tom. ii. p. 129. edit. Paris, 1698.

² Cyrill. Catech. 4. § 35. p. 69. edit. Paris, 1720.

³ Greg. Nazianz. Carm. de veris et german. Scrip. c. 33. tom. ii. p. 98.

⁴ Epiphan. de Mensur. et Ponder. apud Var. Sacr. per Le Moyne. tom. i. p. 477. edit. Lugd. Batav. 1694.

⁵ Hilar. Prolog. in Psalm.

⁶ Hieron. Præfat. in Libros Salomonis, tom. i. p. 940.

⁷ Comp. p. 504-5 of this work.

⁸ Polycarp. Epist. ad Philipp. p. 60. edit. T. Smith.

⁹ Clemens. Alex. Strom. vol. i. lib. ii. p. 503. edit. Potter.

¹⁰ Clem. Constit. Apost. lib. i. c. i. lib. iii. c. xv. lib. vii. c. ii. Cyprian. passim. August. de Doct. Christ. lib. iii. c. xviii. tom. iii. et Spec. de Tobia Libro, tom. iii. p. 564. Ambros. Lib. de Tobia. Hilar. in Psalm cxxix. n. 7. Basil, &c.

¹¹ Concil. Carthag. iii. An. 397. Can. 47. (see p. 508-9. n.⁷ of this work,) also Concil. Hippon. A. 393. Can. 38. Vid. also, P. Innocent I. Epist. 3. ad Exuper. et Cosin's Schol. Hist. § 83.

¹² Cosin's ch. xvi. § 159, 160. See p. 509. n.² of this work.

Trent¹, are adduced as esteeming it canonical. An erroneous notion prevailed, (upon the alleged authority of Jerom) that it had been classed by the Jews among the Hagiographa².

Houbigant imagines, that the only reason why it was not admitted into the canon was, because, being a private history, there were probably but few copies; and that these being kept at Ecbatana, in Media, where Tobias retired, the work, though then written, might not have been known to Ezra: but, indeed, if it had been then written, and known to the compiler of the canon, it could have had no title to be classed among the canonical books as of the same authority with them. The author does not pretend to prophesy himself; but collects only what had been delivered by the Prophets³; describing the fate of Nineveh⁴; the dispersion of his countrymen; the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the

¹ Concil. Trid. Sess. 4.

² Hieron. Præf. in Libros Solomonis et in Tobiam, tom. i. p. 1158. edit. Par. 1693. In some corrupt copies of this last preface, St. Jerom is represented to have said that the Jews reckoned Tobit among the Hagiographa; but the word Hagiographa is probably, as many of the Romanists allow, a corruption, and substituted for Apocrypha. Those, however, who contend for the authenticity of the expression, must at least admit, that Hagiographa is used only in an inferior sense; for St. Jerom, in the same place, affirms, that the Jews excluded it from the catalogue of the Divine writings, and censured him for translating a book not in their canon. Vid. Cosin's Schol. Hist. § 73. p. 83.

³ Chap. xiv. 4, 5.

⁴ Grotius thinks that Jonas is inserted in chap. xiv. 4. 8. by mistake for Nahum. But Jonah's prophecy, in ch. iii. 4. of his book, may be supposed to include the destruction of Nineveh by the Medes and Babylonians. Its accomplishment was protracted but not frustrated.

temple, in the same manner that Jonah and other Prophets had foretold them.

There are no circumstances mentioned in this book which are inconsistent with the period in which Tobit is related to have lived⁵; nor is there any internal objection to the supposition of its being compiled soon after the events therein described, or at least before the time of Christ. In the Vulgate, the temple of Jerusalem is spoken of as already burnt⁶; and it has been supposed that part of Tobit's prophetic assurance was drawn from the writings of Jeremiah; but as in the Greek version, from which our translation is made, that destruction is spoken of prophetically⁷ as yet to happen; and as all the predictions which are inserted might have been drawn from Prophets who preceded the time of Tobit, there is no reason to dispute the antiquity ascribed to him or to his book⁸. From the same sacred source of the earlier Prophets, might have been derived those predictions which Tobit records relative to the calling of the Gentiles⁹; and the restoration of

⁵ It should be remarked, that Nebuchodonosor, mentioned in ch. xiv. 15, was Nabopolassar. Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. xi. comp. with lib. i. cont. Apion. § 19. et Juchasin. fol. 136, Assuerus was Astyages, or his son, Cyaxares of Herodotus. Nineveh was taken A. M. 3392. Vid. Prid. An. 612. Chapter on Nahum, in this work.

⁶ Chap. xiv. 7. and xiii. 11. Vulgate.

⁷ Chap. xiv. 4. drawn perhaps from Micah iii. 12.

⁸ Aman, mentioned in chap. xiv. 10. was not Haman the proud enemy of Mordecai and the Jews, mentioned in the book of Esther, nor Judith's husband, but some predecessor or contemporary of Tobit, with whose history we are unacquainted.

⁹ Ch. xiii. 11. which perhaps alludes to the offering of the wise men, described in St. Matt. ii. 11. The prediction may be drawn from David's prophecy in Psalm lxxii. 10. of which the very words

Jerusalem to a magnificence prefigurative of its future spiritual glory in the establishment of the Christian Church¹.

With respect to the history contained in this book, there is no sufficient reason to question its truth, at least as to the main particulars; and the Jews do not appear to have entertained any doubts on the subject². It is written with much simplicity, and with an air of truth. The characters are described with great sincerity and effect; and the minute details of genealogy, of time, place, and personal circumstances³, while they heighten the interest, tend to demonstrate the truth and reality of the relation. Tobit, then, is to be considered as a real character; he was born, probably,

are introduced in the Hebrew copy published by Fagius. See also chap. xiv. 6, 7. which might be grounded on the prophecies in Micah v. 12. 14. Isaiah ii. 18. xxxi. 7. Zechar. xiii. 2, &c.

¹ Chap. xiii. 16—18. xiv. 5—8. which passages resemble some metaphorical descriptions of St. John. Vid. Rev. xxi. 10—27. xxii. 3—6. but they were probably borrowed from Isa. liv. 11—17.

² Juchasin, Hieron. Epist. ad Chromat. et Heliod. Grot. Præf. ad Tob. Vid. also Sixt. Senens. Bib. Sanct. lib. viii.

³ Chap. v. 16. The mention of Tobias's dog has been frequently represented as a ludicrous and unnecessary particular. But there is often as much want of taste as of candour in criticism of this nature. The introduction of such incidental particulars is not unusual in the most admired works of antiquity. Vid. Odyss. lib. ii. l. 11. Æneid. lib. viii. l. 461-2. It deserves to be remarked, that in the eleventh chapter of the Vulgate, the dog is said to have run before, coming as it were a messenger; and the Syriac version represents Anna to have first received the dog; and, indeed, the Greek has been thought to intimate nearly as much, for it says, not that she saw Tobias himself, but *προσενόησεν αὐτὸν ἐρχόμενον*, "perceived that he was coming," as possibly by the dog. In this there is nothing low or ridiculous, but an incident familiar and elegant. Compare with Odyss. lib. xvii. l. 300-4.

during the reign of Ahaz; he was of the tribe of Nephthali, in the city of Thisbe⁴, in Upper Galilee; and he was carried captive to Nineveh after the extinction of the kingdom of Israel, by Enemassar, or Salmanassar, about A.M. 3283⁵.

The history of this captive, and of his family, is here related in a very interesting manner; it is enlivened with much variety of occurrence, and decorated by the display of many virtues. Some of the incidents, as the ministry of the angel, under false semblance and assumptions; the influence and defeat of the evil spirit, as well as the blindness and recovery of Tobit, have appeared so improbable to many writers, that they have chosen to consider the whole book merely as an instructive fiction⁶, designed to illustrate the relative and social charities of life, and to exhibit a pattern of virtue exercised in trials, and recompensed in this world; but there are not any physical objections to the causes assigned either for the deprivation⁷ or

⁴ Thisbe was at the right hand (that is, to the south; for the Jews, in the description of places, suppose the speaker to face the east) of Kadesh. Nephthali (*Κυδίως*, or *κυρίως*, or *καδίως*, *της Νεφθαλί*) the same place, perhaps, with Cades, the capital of Nephthali, and possibly the Cadytes of Herodotus. It was one of the three cities of refuge on the west side of the Jordan. The Vulgate represents Tobit to have been born at Nephthali. Vid. Calmet and Arnald in loc.

⁵ The tribe of Nephthali in general had been carried into captivity about twenty years before by Tiglath-Pileser. Vid. 2 Kings xv. 29. The year of Tobit's death is uncertain; all the copies differ. The Vulgate supposes him to have lived 102 years; the Greek 158. Both accounts are erroneous.

⁶ Paul Fagius. It has been compared to the *Cyropædia* of Xenophon, and the *Telemachus* of Fenelon.

⁷ Chap. ii. 10. Tobit appears to have slept in a court-yard,

restoration ⁸ of sight to Tobit; or if they are not naturally capable of producing such effects, they might still be miraculously rendered instruments in the hands of Providence.

With respect to the agency of the angels, there is nothing inconsistent with reason, received opinions ⁹, or Scripture ¹, in supposing a limited superintendence of superior beings. We know, indeed, that under the peculiar circumstances of the Jewish economy, the ministry of angels was manifestly employed in subserviency to God's designs; and that particular per-

because polluted by the dead body which he had buried, and his eyes might have been open accidentally, or affected when he awoke. Some suppose that the bird spoken of was a swallow, of which the excrement is stated by naturalists to be hot and acrimonious, and capable of causing blindness. Vide Plin. Hist. l. xi. c. xxxvii. Gesner, Hist. Anim. l. iii.

⁸ It is uncertain of what species was the fish mentioned in this book. The gall of the fish called *Callionymus* has been supposed to be efficacious in removing specks and obstructions of the sight. Vid. Galen de Simplic. Medicam. Facult. lib. x. c. xii. Ælian, lib. xiii. c. iv. Bochart Hieroz. par. ii. lib. v. c. xiv. Aldrovand. Ornithol. l. xvii. Vales de Sac. Philosoph. But this fish appears to be too small to correspond with the description of that of Tobit. Bochart contends for the *Silurus*, the sheat-fish, or sturgeon, called also, the *Glanis*. This naturalists describe as large and voracious. Vid. Ray and Johnston. Its liver is said to be famous for removing suffusions and dimness. Vid. Houbigant. But it is objected that this fish, as having no scales, could not be eaten consistently with the restrictions of the Levitical Law. Vid. Lev. xi. 10, 11. The livers of many other fishes may have the same sanative qualities.

⁹ Hesiod Oper. et Dies, l. 122-6. Plato de Legibus, lib. x. p. 887. tom. ii. edit. Serani. Apuleius de Deo Socratis. Buxtorf. Synag. Jud. c. x. Orphei Hymn. ad Mus. Plutarch in Brut. Barnab. Epist. c. xviii.

¹ Acts xii. 15.

sonages were occasionally favoured with their familiar intercourse. It is likewise unquestionable, that before the power and malevolence of evil spirits were checked and restricted by the control of our Saviour, their open influence was experienced²; and though in the accounts of this book, invisible beings be represented as endued with corporeal affections, and described under traditionary names of Chaldæan extraction; and though the whole history of their proceedings as here recorded, be in some measure accommodated to vulgar conceptions³; yet it would be a violation of all just rules of criticism, to consider the agency of these beings as a mere allegorical machinery. Indeed, the events recorded are so dependent on their supposed inter-

² Matt. iv. 24. viii. 28. Mark i. 32. Luke viii. 2.

³ Ch. vi. 17. viii. 2, 3. The supposed effect of fumigation on demons was agreeable to vulgar notions. The ceremonies enjoined and performed, however, seem to savour of superstition, and to be inconsistent with the injunctions of Scripture. Josephus mentions a root called Baara, which, when drawn from the ground by a dog, was supposed to have some physical qualities which expelled evil spirits from the bodies of those whom they possessed. *De Bello Jud.* lib. vii. c. vi. p. 1308. edit. Hudson. See also *Antiq.* lib. viii. c. ii. p. 339. Athenæus, lib. x. p. 442. edit. Casaubon. The perfume to which an influence is ascribed in this book, was probably rendered efficacious by faith, prayer, and continence. See Matt. xvii. 21. and the burning of the entrails of the fish may have been enjoined rather as a sign and intimation, than as a physical cause of the defeat of the evil spirit, as in John ix. 6. It has pleased God upon many occasions, when he has exerted a miraculous power, to enjoin some external observances as indications of faith and obedience. See 2 Kings v. 10. John ix. 7. The flight of the evil spirit, and his being bound by Raphael, implies only that he was circumscribed and restricted in his power by an expulsion to the supposed sphere of demons. Vid. Luke viii. 29. Matt. xii. 43. Hieron. in Hierem. c. xxviii.

ference, and the miraculous circumstances are so incorporated with the history, that the truth of the whole account rests on the same foundation, and the particular parts cannot be separately removed.

Still, however, those who consider the whole book as a moral fiction, designed for the particular consolation of the Jews in captivity, or for their general instruction and encouragement in affliction, may derive the same profit from that fine spirit of piety and benevolence which breathes through every part of the book⁴; and which occasionally breaks out into those beautiful sentiments that have been imitated by succeeding writers, and copied out into the Liturgy of our church⁵; and which sometimes approach even the refined precepts of Christianity⁶. It must be admitted, however, that there are passages in the book which express notions incompatible with the doctrines of Scripture. The angel appears in some instances to be invested with a mediatorial character⁷, in a manner injurious to the pre-eminence of Christ, and to be endued with attributes of omnipotence, and at the same time to utter what was not really true⁸. The Romish church has endeavoured to avail itself of the authority of the book to countenance some errors, and superstitious practices.

The passage in chap. iv. 17, "Pour out thy bread"⁹

⁴ Ch. iii. viii. xiii.

⁵ Tobit iv. 7, 8, 9, and the Communion Service.

⁶ Ch. iv. 7. comp. with Luke xi. 41. Ch. iv. 15. with Matt. vii. 12. and Luke xi. 31. Ch. iv. 16. with Luke xiv. 13. Ch. viii. ix. comp. with 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.

⁷ Ch. xii. 15.

⁸ Ch. v. 12.

⁹ The old Latin version, according to the Chaldee, adds, "and the wine."

on the burial of the just, but have nothing to do with the wicked," relates probably to the entertainments given in honour of the dead, which were customary among the Jews¹ as well as other nations, and sometimes observed even at the sepulchres² of the deceased: it has been strained, however, to countenance masses for the dead³.

In the old Roman Missal, and in the Missal of Sarum, there is a proper mass of Raphael the archangel; and in the prefatory rubric it is directed, that the office be celebrated for pilgrims or travellers, and also for sick persons and demoniacs⁴; upon notions of the archangel's character, built on the relations of this book. Afterwards follow two short prayers, one addressed to God, and one to Raphael himself; the offensive impiety of which practice, as derogatory to the honour of God, and the exclusive mediation of Jesus Christ, was happily exposed by the light of the Reformation.

¹ Joseph. Antiq. lib. xvii. c. viii. p. 771. de Bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. i. p. 1027. Jerem. xvi. 7, 8.

² Meursius de Funer. c. xxxv. Villalpandus in Ezech. xxiv. 17. Eccles. xxx. 18. Eustath. in Homer, lib. xxiii.

³ Estius in loc.

⁴ Arnald's Dissertat. on the Demon Asmodæus.

OF THE

BOOK OF JUDITH.

THE author, and the period of this history, are both uncertain¹. Some commentators imagine that it was written by Joacim or Eliakim, whom they conceive to have been high-priest in the reign of Manasses²; and that it was translated into Chaldee for the use of those Jews in the captivity at Babylon, who had forgotten their own language. Others attribute the work to Joshua, the son of Josedech³, the companion of Zerubabel. But by whomsoever, or in whatever language it was produced, the original is not now extant. The Hebrew copy, which some have professed to have seen at Constantinople⁴, was probably a work of modern composition; and our English translation, as well as the Syriac, is made from a Greek version which existed probably long before the time of Theodotion, as it seems to have been known to Clemens Romanus⁵.

¹ Isidor. Orig. lib. vi. c. ii. Serar. Prolog. in Jud. St. Jerom seems to consider it as the production of Judith. Vid. in Agg. i. 6. tom. iii. p. 1187.

² Ch. iv. 6.

³ Pseudo-Philo. Lib. de Temp. R. Asarias, Sixt. Senens. Jul. Roger de Lib. Can. c. xx.

⁴ Lib. Munster. Præf. in Tob. Hebræum.

⁵ Clemens Rom. Epist. ad Corinth. c. lv. p. 210. edit. Wotton. Vid. also, Polycarp. et Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. iv. p. 617.

The most probable opinion is, that the book was originally written in Chaldee ⁶ by some Jew of Babylon; and it might possibly have been designed to enliven the confidence of the Jews during the captivity, and to invigorate their hopes of a deliverance.

Upon a supposition of the truth of the history, the circumstances described must have occurred previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, since the Persians are represented as still subject to the Assyrian empire ⁷; and Nineveh, which is here mentioned as the capital of Nebuchodonosor's empire ⁸, was overthrown before that destruction; and upon the impending invasion of Holophernes, the Jews are said in this book to have been troubled, "for the city and temple of their God." Usher, therefore, Lloyd, and Prideaux, have agreed in considering the history as coeval with the time of Manasses ⁹: placing it in about the forty-fourth year of his reign, A.M. 3348. Prideaux, with other writers, after a judicious investigation of the several opinions that have been entertained upon the subject ¹, maintains

⁶ Hieron. Præf. in Lib. Judith.

⁷ Ch. i. 7—10.

⁸ Ch. i. 1.

⁹ Some place it in the reign of Amon, or in that of Josiah, and others contend for the time of Jehoiakim. Some writers, who place it in the reign of Zedekiah, conceive that Nebuchodonosor was the same person with Nebuchadnezzar; upon which supposition, Jerusalem must have been taken in the same year that Bethulia was besieged, if we follow the accounts of the Greek copies of this book, which place the expedition of Holophernes in the eighteenth year of Nebuchodonosor's reign; for the eighteenth of Nebuchadnezzar coincides with the ninth year of Zedekiah.

¹ The ancient tradition among the Jews was, that the circumstances of the history happened under the reign of Cambyzes, after he had conquered Arphaxad. Vid. Euseb. Chron. Hist. Scholast.

that the Arphaxad of this book was Deioces²: and Nebuchodonosor, Saosduchinus, who ascended the throne of Babylon, A.M. 3336; and the learned author places the expedition of Holophernes in A.M. 3349: making the twelfth year of Saosduchinus to coincide with the forty-third of Manasses³.

But though the history cannot with consistency be assigned to any other time than that of Manasses⁴,

Dionys. Carthus. Suidas, verbo Holophernes. But the capital of Cambyses was Babylon, and he reigned but seven years and three months. Vid. Herod. lib. iii. cap. lxvi. p. 230. edit. Wesseling. Others attribute the history to the time of Xerxes. Vid. Suidas, verbo Judith. Riber, in Nahum ii. Estius and others to the time of Darius Hystaspes; and Sulpicius Severus assigns it to a still later period, placing it under the reign of Ochus, King of Persia. Vid. Hist. Sac. lib. ii. p. 315-16. Bellarm. de Verb. Dei, lib. i. c. xii. tom. i. p. 38. Augustin de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 26.

² Deioces founded Ecbatana; and the beginning of the twelfth year of Saosduchinus, coincides with the last year of Deioces. These and other concurrent circumstances seem to prove, that Deioces and Arphaxad must have been the same person; though some writers relate that Deioces lived long, and died old, in prosperity. Calmet supposes Arphaxad to be the Phraortes of Herodotus, the circumstances of whose life and death, as he conceives, correspond better with the accounts of this book, and who may be supposed to have finished the fortifications of Ecbatana, as described in chap. i. 2—4. Vid. Herod. lib. i. c. cii. p. 52.

³ Prid. Con. vol. i. part. i. B.C. 655. Calmet's Preface. Bellarm. de Verb. Dei, lib. i. c. xii. Usher, Annal. A. 3335 et 3347.

⁴ Manasses himself is not mentioned in this book, (nor, indeed, any king,) whence some have supposed that the siege of Bethulia happened during his captivity at Babylon; or that he was withholden from an active part from cautious or prudential considerations; or lastly, that he was then engaged in sequestered repentance. But as Bethulia was on the frontiers, the defence of it might have been entrusted to the high-priest. The precise situation of Bethulia

there are still so many objections to this period, that many writers have chosen to consider the whole work as a religious romance. It must be confessed, indeed, to be extraordinary, that neither Philo nor Josephus should make any mention of this signal deliverance; for the latter especially, though he professed to confine himself to such accounts as were contained in the Hebrew, (that is, the authentic canonical) books⁵, yet by no means adheres so strictly to his plan that he might not have been expected to have mentioned so remarkable an interposition of God in favour of his country; but as this omission can only furnish a presumptive argument against the truth of the history; and as the apparent inconsistencies may be accounted for without destroying the credibility of the chief particulars; it is more reasonable to consider it as the history of real events⁶: since many of its circumstances correspond with the accounts of ancient historians⁷;

is not known; some place it in the territory of Zebulun, in which there appears to have been a town of that name, but Judith, Manasses, and Ozias were of the tribe of Simeon. There might have been a frontier town in the hilly country of Simeon, towards Syria, named Bethulia, though we have no other mention of it in history. We cannot, however, suppose it to have been the same place with Bethel, or Bethuel, mentioned in Joshua xix. 4. and 1 Chron. iv. 30. without allowing that the author has been guilty of some geographical mistakes. Vid. chap. iii. 9, 10. and iv. 6. Calmet in chap. xi. 7; and Arnald in chap. vi. 10.

⁵ Proœm. Antiq. et Vita Josephi.

⁶ Montfauçon *Verité de l'Histoire de Judith*. Howel's *Hist. of Bible*, vol. ii. book vi. p. 174. Houbigant *Præf. et Not.* Herod. lib. i. c. cii.

⁷ Nebuchodonosor is styled Saosduchinus by Ptolemy and other writers. Nebuchodonosor was, indeed, properly the name of the

and the Jews as well as the earlier Christians, believed it to be a relation of historical truths.

Many also of the difficulties which occur in considering the history; and many of the objections to the period which is assigned to it, are to be attributed to corruptions which have taken place in the Greek version⁸; and which are among the inconsistencies that St. Jerom professes to have lopped off as spurious when he made his translation, which is now extant in the Vulgate⁹. Some originate in the obscurity that necessarily hangs over a period so distant, and so little illustrated by the remains of ancient history¹; and some

Babylonian kings: but the Jews seem to have called all the princes who reigned beyond the Euphrates by that name, as in Tobit, Nabopolassar is so called. Vid. Tobit xiv. 15.

⁸ The third verse of the fourth chapter represents the Jews as newly returned from the captivity; but this is not in St. Jerom's version. So likewise, the words in the sixteenth verse of the fifth chapter, which speak of the temple as being cast to the ground, are rescinded as a corruption by St. Jerom; though the original Greek words *ἐγενήθη εἰς ἔδαφος*, might mean only that the temple was profaned and trampled on; as it was at several times, and, perhaps, by the Assyrians, when Manasses was taken prisoner. The captivities and dispersion spoken of both in the Greek and Latin, may be understood of the Assyrian captivities under Manasses. Vid. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11—13.

⁹ Chap. i. 13. which differs five years from the date given in chap. i. 1. In St. Jerom's version there is no apparent inconsistency. In chap. ii. 1. the eighteenth year is placed, in consequence of the same calculation, instead of the thirteenth, as it stands in St. Jerom's version. It is, however, possible, that there is no mistake, and that five years might have intervened between the preparations for war, and the attack on Arphaxad.

¹ Joacim, or Eliakim, is represented in this book as high-priest, though no high-priest of that name is mentioned before the captivity by Josephus, or in the Scriptures, unless we attribute that character

may be charged on the ignorance of the author, who compiled the book from such materials as he could procure; and who, to give importance to his history, and to magnify the characters which he describes, has embellished his work, sometimes at the expence of chronology and truth ².

If these causes of inconsistency be admitted, there will be no necessity to question the truth of the principal circumstances in this history; and to have recourse to such imaginations as Grotius ³ and others have entertained; who have amused themselves by considering it as an instructive fiction, or ingenious allegory; and have indulged in speculations that may serve to prove the fertility of their invention, but which conduce but little to illustrate truth; or to increase our reverence for works, respectable at least for their antiquity to the Eliakim spoken of by Isaiah, chap. xxii. 20—25. But the catalogue of Josephus is corrupted, and the Scriptures no where profess to furnish an exact succession of the priests. Vid. Prid. Con. vol. i. part i. Anno 677. p. 45.

² It is said in chap. xvi. 23. that none made Israel afraid in the days of Judith, nor a long time after her death. Now as we cannot suppose her to have been more than forty years old when she captivated Holophernes; (probably not so old, especially as she is called fair damsel, *Καλὴ παιδίσκη*, chap. xii. 13.) and as she lived to the age of 105, there must have been a sixty years peace at least after the deliverance; which was a longer space of time than intervened between the forty-fifth year of Manasses, and the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, (not to mention the dangers under Josiah, and the defeat and death of that monarch); or, indeed, than any period of uninterrupted peace in the course of the Jewish history. We must, therefore, suppose the author to have spoken hyperbolically of the effects of Judith's heroism.

³ Grot. Præf. ad Annot. in lib. Judith. Grotius fancies that it is a parabolical, or ænigmatic fiction, written in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, to encourage the Jews under the persecution carried on

and sanctions ; and valuable for the instruction which they afford. It may be observed also, as an intrinsic mark of the truth of this history, that the author appears to speak of Achior's family as living at the time when the book was written⁴, and that in the last verse of the Vulgate, it is said that the day of Judith's triumph had ever since been celebrated as a sacred festival⁵.

It appears from the accounts of Origen⁶, and St. Jerom⁷, that the Jews reckoned this book among their apocryphal writings. It is no where cited by our Saviour or his apostles⁸ ; it is not in the catalogues

by him. He imagines that Judith is the Jewish nation ; and Bethulia the house of God ; that by Nebuchodonosor and Holophernes, are meant the devil and his agent, and he offers other whimsical conceits to explain this supposed allegory. Vid. similar notions in Luther, Reineccius, and Capellus, Limborch. Theolog. lib. i. cap. iii. § 9. p. 10. edit. Amstel. 1686.

⁴ Chap. xiv. 10.

⁵ Chap. xvi. 31. Vulgate. This verse is not in the Greek, Syriac, or ancient Latin versions, nor is the festival mentioned in any authentic Hebrew calendars. Some writers, however, suppose that it was anciently observed. Vid. Selden de Syned. lib. iii. c. xiii. § x. vol. i. p. 1743. edit. Wilkins. Scaliger de Emend. Tem. lib. vii. p. 633. et Calmet in loc.

⁶ Homil. xxvii. in Numeros, p. 374.

⁷ Hieron. Præf. in Judith. Some manuscripts of St. Jerom read improperly Hagiographa, instead of Apocrypha. Vid. Chapter on Tobit in this work.

⁸ There is a resemblance between Elizabeth's salutation of Mary, in Luke i. 42. and the encomium bestowed on Judith by Ozias, in chap. xiii. 18. of this book ; as, likewise, between the exhortation of St. Paul, and a passage in chap. viii. 24, 25. of the Vulgate copy of Judith. The coincidence of expression is probably accidental in both parallels. St. Paul in the last alludes to the circumstances mentioned in Numb. xxi. 6. and xiv. 37.

furnished by Melito, Origen, and Athanasius, nor was it received by Hilary, Gregory Nazianzen, Cyril of Jerusalem, or the Council of Laodicea. Being quoted, however with respect by many ancient writers⁹; and considered as canonical in a secondary sense by St. Augustin¹ and the African church², it was received indiscriminately, and as of the same authority with the inspired books by the Council of Trent³, which canonized St. Jerom's translation; and since that time it has been generally revered as an inspired work by the writers of the Romish church; who are, how-

⁹ Clem. Epist. ad Corinth. c. lv. p. 210. Clem. Constit. Apost. Origen. Homil. xix. in Jerom. tom. iii. p. 271. edit. Par. 1740. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. iv. p. 617. edit. Potter. Tertull. de Monog. c. xvii. Ambros. de Offic. lib. iii. c. xiii. tom. ii. et de Vid. c. vii. August. de Doct. Christ. lib. ii. c. viii. tom. iii.

¹ St. Augustin expressly remarks that this book was said not to have been admitted into the Hebrew canon. Vid. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xxvi.

² Concil. Carthag. 3. canon 47. See also, the suspected epistle of Pope Innocent I. where the books of Tobit, Judith, and Maccabees, are reckoned as scripture.

³ Concil. Trid. Sess. 4. Some controversialists have asserted that St. Jerom allowed, by implication at least, that the book of Judith was canonized by the Council of Nice. Vid. Bellar. de V. Dei, lib. i. c. x. Baron. Annal. tom. iii. Ann. 325. sect. 157. But in the acts of this council, the book is not mentioned; and in the place referred to, (vid. Hieron. Præf. in Judit. p. 1170. tom. i. edit. Par. 1693,) St. Jerom only says, that the Council of Nice is *reported* (legitur) to have reckoned this book in the number of the *sacred writings*; and he remarks that the Hebrews (that is the Hellenists, or the converted Jews) considered it as Apocryphal; and elsewhere (vid. Præf. in Lib. Solom. p. 939.) that the church, though it read Judith, did not receive it as canonical. Vid. also in Prol. Gal. Epist. 47. ad Furiam, tom. iv. p. 561. et Bellarm. de Verbo Dei, lib. i. c. x. Erasm. in Censur. Præf. Hieron.

ever, much perplexed and distressed for want of arguments to support its pretensions.

The book presents an interesting scene of ambition frustrated, and of intemperance punished. The history is written with great grandeur and animation, and the Assyrian and Hebrew manners are well described. The prayer, and the hymn of Judith, are composed with much piety ⁴. The work contains nothing exceptionable in point of doctrine, for where Judith celebrates God's justice in punishing the crime of the Shechemites ⁵, she need not be understood to justify Simeon for his vindictive and indiscriminate cruelty. If the address with which she accomplished her designs should be thought to partake too much of an insidious character, we may be permitted, at least, to admire the heroic patriotism and piety which prompted her to undertake the exploit; the urgency and importance of the occasion, will likewise excuse the hazardous exposure of her person to intemperate passions; and in the general description of her character, she may be allowed to have presented an exemplary display of the virtues which become the widowed state ⁶, and excited her to actions of extraordinary prowess.

⁴ Chapters ix. xvi.

⁵ Chap. ix. 2.

⁶ Ambrose de Vit. Fulgent. Epist. 2. edit. Paris, 1684.

OF THE

REST OF THE CHAPTERS OF THE

BOOK OF ESTHER.

THE Chapters entitled, The Rest of the Chapters of the Book of Esther, are not extant in the Hebrew, or in the Chaldaic language, but only in the Greek and Latin copies. Origen was of opinion, that they had formerly existed in the Hebrew¹, though omitted in the copies that remained in his time; and Huet, upon a very probable supposition, conceives them to have been the production of the great Synagogue; and, on the alleged authority of Origen, represents them to have been rendered into Greek from some more copious manuscripts by the Septuagint translators²;

¹ Vid. Origen in Johan. tom. ii. et Epist. ad African.

² Origen, indeed, quoting some passages from the fourteenth chapter of the book of Esther, says, "in the book of Esther, according to the Seventy," the spurious parts being annexed to some copies of the Septuagint, though, indeed, long after that version was made, as Origen must have known, however he might think it unnecessary there to distinguish the canonical from the spurious parts. Vid. Epist. ad African. Origen elsewhere rejects these additions as apocryphal. Vid. Sixt. Senens. Bib. Sanct. lib. i. sect. 3. et lib. v. Annot. 250.

but these translators certainly confined themselves to the canonical books.

It is at least very doubtful whether these chapters did ever exist in the Hebrew language; and it is unquestionable that they never were in the Hebrew canon. If, likewise, we are to rely on the accounts of this book, there is reason to believe that even the authentic book of Esther was not translated by the author of the Septuagint into Greek: for in the first verse of the second chapter of this apocryphal part, it is said, that the Epistle of Phurim, by which was probably meant the book of Esther, was interpreted into Greek by Lysimachus³; who was possibly an Hellenistical Jew residing at Jerusalem; and the apocryphal parts contained in this book were, perhaps, added to the Greek translation by Dositheus and Ptolemeus, or by some other Hellenists of Alexandria. They appear to have been subsequent additions interpolated in various parts of the Greek copies by some person desirous of giving embellishment to the history; and who inserted into the body of the work such traditionary or fanciful circumstances as his inquiry or invention could furnish. From the Greek these additions were translated into the old Italic version⁴.

³ According to this account, it was translated in the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy; who, if he were Ptolemy Philometor, lived long after the Septuagint translation was made. Some conceive that Ptolemy Philadelphus was meant; in the seventh year of whose reign that version is supposed to have been executed; and Huet imagines that the Seventy adopted this work of Lysimachus into their translation of the scriptures, on an idea that it was executed before the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus.

⁴ This differed both from the Hebrew and Greek copies.

They were not, however, considered as canonical by the ancient church⁵, though they might sometimes pass uncensured as annexed to the canonical book. St. Jerom, who confined himself to what was in the Hebrew, did not admit them into his translation⁶; but represented them as rhetorical appendages and embellishments, subjoined to the Italic version. Since that time, the most judicious writers⁷ have not scrupled to consider them as extrinsic and spurious additions; though they are canonized, together with the authentic chapters, by the Council of Trent; and passages from them are inserted in the offices of the Romish church.

⁵ Melito ap. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. l. iv. c. xxvi. p. 149. Athan. Epist. 39. Gregor. Nazianz. Carm. de veris et german. Script. Libris, tom. ii. p. 98. Par. 1630. Sixt. Senens, Bib. Sanct. lib. i. sect. 3. p. 27. Even the canonical book of Esther, indeed, is not expressly enumerated in these catalogues: either because of the spurious additions, or as the generality of writers suppose, because the authentic book was reckoned as one book with those of Ezra and Nehemiah; the three being attributed to the same author. The Fathers profess to receive the whole of the Hebrew canon exclusively; and in the synopsis attributed to Athanasius, the apocryphal part of Esther, which is described as beginning with the dream of Mordecai, is rejected; and the authentic part is there said to be reckoned as one book with another; which other must have been that of Ezra. Vid. also Hieron. Præf. in Ezram et Nehem. The book is reckoned in the catalogues of Origen, Hilary, Cyril, and Epiphanius; and in that of the Council of Laodicea.

⁶ Hieron. Præf. in Esther. In the Greek church they are still suffered to constitute a part of the book of Esther.

⁷ Grotius Præf. ad Addit. Esther. Dionys. Carthus. Cajetan. Raynold Heidegger, lib. ii. c. x. Kenthii Proleg. ad Lib. Apoc. V. T. p. 27. Sixtus Senensis calls them, *laceras Appendices et pannosa Additamenta*. Vid. Bib. Sanct.

It is manifest, on considering the canonical book, that it is a complete and perfect work ; and these apocryphal parts, which are introduced into the Greek copies, will appear to be superfluous and cumbrous additions to those who take the pains to examine them. They are in a different style from that of the authentic chapters, and consist partly of a repetition of particulars contained in them. The first chapter, which in the Greek copies is annexed to the tenth of the canonical chapters, consists of an interpretation of a pretended dream of Mordecai, which contains some fanciful conceits, and was furnished probably by the same person who fabricated the dream, which follows in the next chapter. The intimation contained in the first verse of the second or eleventh chapter, was possibly written by some Jew of Alexandria ; it was not in the ancient Italic version. The dream which is related in this eleventh chapter, and which in the Greek is placed before the canonical part, is evidently the reverie of some inventive writer ; and was afterwards prefixed to the work. It does not form a proper introduction to the book ; and in the fifth verse of the second canonical chapter, Mordecai is introduced as a person not before mentioned ; and his genealogy, and other particulars, are described there, and in the succeeding verse, with a minuteness which must have been quite redundant, if the second verse of the eleventh chapter had been authentic.

The account of the devices, and of the discovery of the two eunuchs who conspired against the life of Artaxerxes, is a repetition, with some alterations, of what is related in the second chapter of the authentic part⁸ ;

⁸ Esther ii. 21—23.

and could not properly be prefixed (as it is in the Greek) to the canonical book, which opens the history as if nothing had been previously communicated. The sixth or fifteenth chapter contains a description of Esther's appearance and reception by the King, which is borrowed from the fifth chapter of the genuine history⁹, and diversified with some supposititious particulars. So, likewise, the prayers of Mordecai and Esther, contained in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters¹; as well as the letter in the thirteenth² chapter; and that in the sixteenth³, which concludes the apocryphal book, are all obviously fictitious inventions, designed by some rhetorical writer⁴, to decorate and complete the history. They are probably accounts fabricated in designed conformity to particulars alluded to by the inspired writer in his book; and are interwoven with some ingenuity into the body of the work. The forgery is, however, occasionally betrayed by the introduction of circumstances incompatible with the genuine parts⁵; and somewhat inconsistent with the period

⁹ The fifteenth chapter is, in the Greek and Vulgate, inserted immediately after Esther's prayer (as given in the fourteenth chapter) instead of the two first verses of the fifth chapter.

¹ These prayers are placed, in the Greek, immediately after the seventeenth verse of the fourth chapter.

² This in the Greek is added after the thirteenth verse of the third chapter. It might be grounded on some authentic accounts, as the substance of it is related by Josephus.

³ This edict in the Greek copies follows the twelfth verse of the eighth chapter. It appears from the style to have been originally written in Greek, and both the letters are mentioned in the authentic book in a manner that shows they were not inserted in the history. Vid. Esth. iii. 14. viii. 13.

⁴ Hieron. ad Paul. et Eustoch. Sixt. Senens. Bib. Sanct. lib. viii.

⁵ Comp. chap. vi. 3. with xii. 5. Chap. v. 2. with chap. xv. 4. Chap. iii. 12. with chap. xiii. 6. Chap. ix. 1. with chap. vi. 8.

assigned to the history⁶. Some Greek and Latin copies contain still more extraneous particulars; and the Chaldee Paraphrase is loaded with accumulated additions. The copies, indeed, vary so much from each other, that Bellarmine⁷ supposes that there must have been two histories, the first written in Hebrew, containing only the substance of the original history, as it stands in the canonical book; the second written also in Hebrew, at a different time by some other writer, more copiously, of which the Greek translation only is come down to us. Our church judiciously adheres to the chapters contained in the Hebrew, which are indisputably authentic; and present us with an entire and valuable history. The adventitious parts, however, though they contain trifling and objectionable passages⁸, are suffered to continue in our Bibles as profitable in a subordinate degree. They deserve not to be incorporated with the genuine history, though they illustrate the characters, and dilate on the virtues displayed for our instruction by the sacred writer.

⁶ The king is made in chap. xvi. 10. to style Aman a Macedonian; and afterwards to talk of his desire “to translate the kingdom of the Persians to the Macedonians:” particulars that lead us to suspect an anachronism, or corruption of the text, as they were more adapted to the sentiments and circumstances of a later period, when the Persians and Macedonians were at war. In the ninth chapter, indeed, of the canonical book, Haman is in the Greek called a Macedonian, but the Hebrew word *האגגי*, should have been rendered as by St. Jerom, and in our translation, the Agagite, that is, of the race of Agag, king of the Amalekites. Josephus describes Haman as an Amalekite. Vid. Antiq. lib. xi. c. vi. p. 490. edit. Hudson. Esther ix. 24. iii. 10.

⁷ Bellarm. de Verb. Dei, lib. i. c. vii.

⁸ Chap. x. xiv. 2.

OF THE
BOOK OF THE WISDOM OF
SOLOMON.

THE works of Solomon, in general, may be emphatically styled the Book of Wisdom, the Book of Proverbs at least was so cited by the Fathers¹; and in ecclesiastical language, the Book of Wisdom applies not only to the authentic books of Solomon, but also to Ecclesiasticus; and to this which is called the Book of Wisdom, or according to the Greek, the Wisdom of Solomon. The author of this book assumes the title, and speaks in the character of that monarch²; but though it may, perhaps, contain some sentiments selected from his works, and others ascribed to him by tradition³, it cannot be received as an inspired book; and it was certainly composed long after the time of Solomon. It never

¹ Melito ap. Euseb. Eccles. lib. iv. c. xxvi. Clem. Epist. ad Cor. c. lvii. p. 218. edit. Wotton, in notis. Origen in Cantic. Prol. et cont. Cels. lib. iii. p. 485. Cyprian Test. lib. iii. c. xvi. Ambrose de Paradiso, c. i. § 6. p. 147. tom. i. edit. Paris, 1686. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. vi. p. 795.

² Vid. c. vii. 7—21. compared with 1 Kings c. iii. 13. c. xiv. 29—34. Vid. c. viii. 14, 15. 19. 21. c. ix. 7, 8, &c.

³ Bartoloc. Biblioth. Rabb. tom. i. p. 249. Rome, 1675.

was in the Hebrew canon⁴, and probably never in the Hebrew language⁵. It is not reckoned in the sacred catalogues of the earlier church; and the generality of ancient writers confess, that it is not to be considered as the work of Solomon. It contains citations of Scripture from the Septuagint, even where that version differs from the Hebrew text⁶; and borrows from books written long after the time of Solomon⁷.

The copy which has the highest pretensions to be considered as the original, is in Greek prose. Some learned men have fancied, that they have discovered in this book, as well as in that of Ecclesiasticus, the Hebrew measure, which obtains in the authentic works of Solomon⁸. The sentences have indeed often a poetical turn; and in the Alexandrian manuscript, they are written in regular arrangement, like the Book of Job, of Psalms, and those of Solomon, to which this was subjoined in some old Latin versions, and by Dr. Grabe in his edition.

Some have conceived that it was translated from the Hebrew into Greek; and others with less reason suppose it to have been rendered from the Chaldee, in

⁴ Melito Epist. ad Onesim. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. xxvi. Athan. Synop. Epiphan. de Pond. et Mensur. Hieron. Præfat. in Lib. Salom. Joh. Damascen. de Fid. Orthod. lib. iv. c. xviii.

⁵ August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xvii. c. xx. et xxiv. Hieron. Prol. Gal.

⁶ Ch. v. 10, 11. from Prov. xxx. 19. Ch. ii. 12. from Isaiah iii. 10.

⁷ Compare Wisd. iii. 14. with Isaiah lvi. 4, 5. Wisd. ix. 13. with Isaiah xl. 13. Wisd. xiii. 11. with Isaiah xlv. 13. Wisd. v. 18. with Isaiah lix. 17. Wisd. ii. 6, 7. with Isaiah lvi. 12.

⁸ Vid. Grabe's Proleg. tom. ult. c. i. ii. § 10. edit. Oxon. 1709. Calmet's Dict. in Wisd. Epiphan. de Ponder. et Mensur.

which language R. Moses Ben Nachman professes to have seen it⁹; though probably what he saw was a translation from the Greek into that language.

But in whatever language it was written, it has always been deservedly esteemed as a treasure of wisdom. It was composed in imitation of the style of Solomon, though, perhaps, not designed to pass for his work, but to communicate such instructions as might be consistent with the assumed character. Many ancient writers have cited it as a work attributed to Solomon, and as not unworthy, from its resemblance to his writings, to be regarded as the performance of that enlightened monarch; and some appear to have considered it as his genuine production¹. Lactantius, with other writers, represents, in loose citation, the description of the just man persecuted, which is contained in the second chapter, to be a prophecy delivered by Solomon concerning our Saviour's sufferings². It is certain, however, that the book was not written by Solomon, as St. Augustin (who likewise considers this passage as prophetic) allows³. The antiquity and high importance of this book, appear to have excited great reverence in the ancient church⁴; and some of the Fathers seem to

⁹ R. Moses Ben Nachman. Prol. Com. in Pentat.

¹ Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. vi. p. 800. edit. Potter. Basil. Hom. 5. in Princip. Proverb. p. 731. tom. ii. edit. Par. 1722. Tertul. cont. Marcion. lib. iii. Origen cont. Cels. lib. iii. § 72. p. 494. Hieron. in Psalm lxxiii. p. 306. tom. ii.

² Lactant. de Ver. Sap. lib. iv. § 16. p. 267. apud Bib. Patr. tom. iii. edit. Colon. Agripp. 1618. Wisd. ii. 12—21.

³ August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xvii. c. xx. p. 483. edit. Par. 1685.

⁴ St. Augustin says, "Non debuit repudiari sententia libri Sapientiae, qui meruit in Ecclesia Christi de gradu lectorum, tam longâ annositate recitari." From this it should seem, that the apocryphal

have thought that the Book of Wisdom, and that of Ecclesiasticus, contained passages, at least, that were inspired. St. Augustin affirms, that the Christian writers who immediately succeeded the apostles, adduced its testimony as Divine⁵; but it does not appear that they, or St. Augustin himself, considered the book as really the work of an inspired penman, since he allowed that neither this work, nor that of Ecclesiasticus, were produced against gainsayers with the same authority as the undoubted writings of Solomon. And he elsewhere admits, that after the death of Malachi, the Jews had no Prophet till the appearance of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist⁶. The Fathers, indeed, in general, however they might be dazzled by particular passages, or consider them as fragments of inspired writings, yet regarded the Book of Wisdom as inferior to the canonical books; they esteemed it as a work of admirable tendency, and as of a scriptural character,

books were read in a lower place by the lectores, or inferior officers of the church. Whereas the inspired books were read by the priests and bishops from a more conspicuous place. *De Gradu Episcoporum*. Vid. August. de Prædest. c. xiv. § 27. p. 534. tom. x. edit. Antwerp. 1700.

⁵ St. Augustin may be understood to mean, that they who cited *Wisd. iv. 11.* cited it as a faithful saying, and as grounded on Divine authority. Vid. de Prædest. Sanct. c. xiv. § 28. p. 808. tom. x. edit. Paris, 1690. et Cyprian. L. de Mortal. p. 415. et Testimon. lib. iii. p. 59. edit. Amstel. 1700. St. Augustin says, likewise, of this book, in an hyperbolical encomium, that it deserves “*omnibus Christianis cum veneratione divinæ auctoritatis audiri.*” Vid. also de Doct. Christ. lib. ii. c. viii. et de Civit. Dei, lib. xiii. c. xvi.

⁶ August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xxxv. p. 517. et lib. xvii. c. xxiv. p. 487. tom. vii.

but not as absolutely derived from the suggestions of the Holy Spirit ⁷.

Some partial councils ⁸ admitted it as canonical in a secondary interpretation of that word; but it was always considered as inferior to the books contained in the Hebrew catalogue, till by the peremptory decision of the Council of Trent, it was received as a work of equal authority with them. Still, however, the most zealous defenders ⁹ of the Romish church acknowledge, that it never was in the Hebrew canon as completed by Ezra ¹; at the closing of which we have every reason to believe that the spirit of inspiration ceased.

⁷ It is expressly or virtually represented as inferior to the sacred books by many writers. Vid. Hierarch. de Divin. Nomin. c. 4. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. xxvi. Athan. Epist. 39. et Synop. Epiphan. de Pond. et Mensur. Philast. de Hæres. Prodiant. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xvii. c. xx. p. 483. St. Austin considers the passage in ch. ii. 12—21. (but see to the end of the chapter) as a prophecy of the passion of Christ, but he does not regard it as authoritative, though received by the Western Church as the reputed work of Solomon. Hugo de S. Vict. de Script. et Scriptor. Sac. c. vi. Thom. Aquinas, in Dionys. de Divin. Nomin. c. iv. Lectio 9. p. 19. tom. x. edit. Antverpiæ, 1612. Du Pin, Diss. Prelim.

⁸ As the third Council of Carthage, that of Sardis, and that of Constantinople in Trullo; the eleventh of Toledo, and that of Florence, provincial synods, or corrupt councils, unduly influenced, of which the canons relative to the Scriptures were in some instances forged or altered, and afterwards not received by œcumenical councils. Vid. Cosin's Schol. Hist. Du Pin, Hist. Eccles. et Bib. Pat. tom. i. p. 1. and Arnald's note to Calmet's Preface.

⁹ As Isidore, Nicephorus, Rabanus Maurus, Hugo, Lyran, Cajetan. Vid. Niceph. lib. iv. c. xxxiii. Limborch. Theolog. Christ. lib. i. c. iii. Melch. Canus Loc. Theolog. lib. v. cap. ult. Baron. Ann. tom. viii. ad ann. 692. Calmet's Preface.

¹ Isidore in one place relates, that some persons reported that it

The book was probably composed by an Hellenistical Jew; but whether before or after Christ, has been disputed. Grotius is of opinion, that it was originally written in Hebrew by a Jew who lived at some time intermediate between Ezra and Simon the Just; and that it was translated by a Christian, with some freedom and additions of evangelical doctrine. But the style, as St. Jerom has observed, indicates rather the artificial contexture of Grecian eloquence, than the terseness and compressive simplicity of the Hebrew language. The book is also replete with allusions to Greek mythology, and with imitations of Grecian writers; with whose works, and especially with those of Plato, the author appears to have been intimately acquainted.

St. Jerom informs us, that many ancient writers affirmed that the Book of Wisdom was written by Philo Judæus; by whom the generality of commentators² suppose to have been meant the Philo senior, who is mentioned by Josephus, as not unskilful in philosophy³; and who appears to have been born before the time of Christ, though his life was prolonged until some time after the publication of the Gospel.

was expunged from the Jewish canon because it contained a clear prophecy of Christ; an idle fable, which Isidore must have discredited. Vid. Offic. lib. i. c. xii.

² Hieron. Præf. in Proverb. Solom. Huet. Prop. 4. Bossuet Præf. in Lib. Sap. Driedo de Eccles. Dogmat. c. iv.

³ Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. c. ix. p. 821. Josephus remarks, that Philo, and some other historians of whom he speaks, were entitled to indulgence, as they had it not in their power to become accurately acquainted with the Hebrew writings; from which we may collect, that he was ignorant of the Hebrew language, and probably he was an Hellenistic Jew, which is consistent with the account of St. Jerom.

There are many reasons which should lead us to suppose that the author lived before the birth of Christ⁴; some passages in it, however, seem to intimate an acquaintance with the particulars of the Gospel dispensation, and to be imitative of parts of the New Testament. A general conformity, also, has been observed between the doctrines and sentiments contained in this book and those dispersed through the works of Philo⁵, which we now possess, and hence some modern writers have assented to the opinion that he was the author of it⁶. Dr. Rainolds imagines that it was composed about A.D. 42, upon the occasion of an order from the emperor Caligula, that his statue should be set up and adored in the temple⁷ of Jerusalem, when Philo was sent to Rome by the Jews to plead against this profanation, but without effect. This supposition the learned writer defends, as consistent with the argument and drift of the Book of Wisdom; and to this theory he refers those precepts in the first and sixth chapters, which describe the duty of princes; as well as the denuncia-

Vid. Joseph. contr. Apion. lib. i. p. 1351. Some poetical fragments of Philo, relative to the Patriarchs, are cited by Alexander Polyhistor. Vid. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. vii. c. xiii. and ix. 20. 24. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. p. 333. 360. and 413. This Philo was a different person from Philo Biblius, who flourished under Adrian and Trajan.

⁴ Origen, Περὶ Ἀρχῶν, lib. iv. p. 192. edit. Par. 1733. Euseb. Demonstr. Evan. lib. i. c. vi. Selden de Pentateuch.

⁵ First published at Paris by Turnebus in 1552, afterwards at London, by Dr. Mangey, in 1742, 2 vols. Vid. collated passages in Calmet's Dissertation sur l'Auteur du Livre de la Sagesse.

⁶ Joh. Beleth de Div. Offic. c. lx. Whitaker's Origin of Arianism, p. 132—136.

⁷ Sueton. in Vita Caligulæ, c. xxii. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. c. ix. Rainolds, Censur. Apoc. Prælect. 22.

tions against tyrants and idolatry; and conceives that they were designed to convey admonition and reproof to Caligula, who had treated him with much insult.

But notwithstanding the many presumptive arguments that have been urged in support of this opinion, there is some reason to believe that the work was not written by Philo of Alexandria⁸, but, indeed, previously to the birth of Christ. Some passages in it appear to be cited by writers who were nearly contemporary with Philo⁹; and it is probable, that a work professing to be the production of Solomon, was published under the Jewish dispensation; as, indeed, by the generality of writers it was supposed to be.

The correspondence which has been conceived to exist between this book and the works of Philo, might, it is said, be occasioned by the plagiarism of the latter; and the supposed resemblances between the passages in this book, and others in the New Testament, may

⁸ This Philo was very conversant with the sacred writings, and indulged himself too much in fanciful explications of them. His works, which blend the principles of Plato with the doctrines of Scripture, are supposed to have been the source at which Origen and the mystical writers imbibed an extravagant spirit of figurative interpretation. Philo is represented to have lived in friendship with St. Peter at Rome in the reign of Claudius, to have been converted to Christianity, and to have afterwards apostatized. Vid. Joseph. lib. xviii. c. ix. Euseb. Hist. lib. ii. c. xvii. xviii. Phot. Cod. 105. Hieron. Catalog. Script. Eccles. c. xi. p. 106. tom. iv. Euseb. Præp. lib. vii. c. xii. Some authors maintain that the Book of Wisdom differs widely from the style of Philo, and contains some principles very opposite to those laid down in his works. Vid. Calmet, Dissertation sur l'Auteur du Livre de la Sagesse, tom. v.

⁹ Barnab. Epist. p. 61. edit. Cotelier. 1700. from Wisd. ii. 12. Clem. Rom. Epist. ad Corinth. c. iii. p. 124. edit. Cotel. from Wisd. ii. 24. c. xxvii. from Wisd. xi. 22. and xii. 12.

be thought on examination to be either imitations of similar passages in the sacred books of the Old Testament¹; or such casual coincidences² of sentiment or expression as may be found between all works treating on the same subject.

It need not, however, be supposed that the beautiful passage contained in the second chapter, though written before the coming of Christ, confers any character of inspiration on the book; for if we consider the description of the just man persecuted and condemned to a shameful death by his conspiring enemies, as bearing a prophetic aspect to the sufferings and condemnation of our Saviour by the Jews; it might still have been framed by a writer conversant with the prophetic books³, without any inspired knowledge.

¹ Thus Wisd. ii. 18. and Matt. xxvii. 43. might both be derived from Psal. xxii. 8, 9. - So Wisd. iii. 7. and Matt. xiii. 43. might be from Dan. xii. 3. Wisd. ii. 7, 8. and 1 Cor. xv. 32. from Isa. xxii. 13. and lvi. 12. Wisd. v. 18, 19. and Eph. vi. 14. from Isa. lix. 17. xi. 5. Wisd. vi. 7. and Acts x. 34, &c. from 2 Chron. xix. 7. or from Job xxxiv. 19. and Deut. x. 17. Wisd. ix. 9. and John i. 1—3. 10. from Prov. viii. 22. Wisd. ix. 13. and Rom. xi. 34. or 1 Cor. ii. 16. from Isa. xl. 13. Wisd. xv. 7. and Rom. ix. 21. from Isa. xlv. 9. and Jerem. xviii. 6. Wisd. xvi. 26. and Matt. iv. 4. from Deut. viii. 3. Wisd. iii. 8. and 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. from Dan. vii. 18—22.

² Comp. Wisd. vi. 3. with Rom. xiii. 1. Wisd. vii. 26. with Heb. i. 3. Wisd. xii. 24. with Rom. i. 23. Wisd. xiii. 1. with Rom. i. 19, 20. There is, however, no reason why the evangelical writers should not be supposed to have occasionally adopted the expressions, or even the sentiments of a pious though uninspired writer.

³ Comp. ch. ii. especially cited by Barnabas, with Isaiah iii. 10. Ch. ii. 18. with Psalm xxii. 8. or xxi. 9. in the Septuagint. See also Matt. xxvii. 43. where David's prophetic expressions are used.

But it is, perhaps, only applicable by casual accommodation and undesigned resemblance to our Saviour, who might be eminently styled "the just man," and who was in an appropriate sense, the Son of God. The picture seems, indeed, to be general, and to resemble descriptions found in other writers ⁴.

The passages in which the author seems to personify the word of God⁵, and to attribute to it distinct powers and effects, are not to be regarded as intentionally prophetic of the attributes and operations of the second person in the Trinity; but were probably founded on traditionary notions, designed as generally descriptive of God's omnipotent proceedings; or they might be accidentally figurative of Christ's character, by being borrowed as to their expressions from parts of the sacred writings⁶. So likewise, those splendid encomiums on wisdom with which the book abounds, though written with a piety highly enraptured and sublime, are not to be considered as inspired and concerted illustrations of that perfect wisdom which dwells in an especial degree in Christ; but as designed only to celebrate that created wisdom, which being derived as an emanation from God, reflects his unspotted perfections, and irradiates the minds of those to whom it is imparted. The author, however, in imitation, per-

The righteous are often called the sons of God in a general sense. Vid. Exod. iv. 22. Prov. i. 8. 10. and Wisd. xviii. 13. and v. 5.

⁴ Plato de Repub. lib. ii. p. 361. Cicero de Repub. de Officiis, &c. Lactant. Institut. de Vero Cultu, lib. vi. sect. 17. ex Senecæ Lib. Moral. Philosoph.

⁵ Ch. ix. 1. xvi. 12, 13. 26. xviii. 15.

⁶ Deut. viii. 3. xxxii. 39. 1 Sam. ii. 6. Psalm cvii. 20.

haps, of Solomon's attractive imagery⁷, personifies this divine wisdom; and therefore the description necessarily bears a resemblance to the character of Christ, in whom the fulness of wisdom personally resided.

But though the work does not appear to be immediately derived from that infallible Spirit of which the stamp and character are to be discovered only in the sacred books, it was evidently the production of a pious and enlightened writer; of one, who by application to revealed wisdom, had acquired some portion of its excellence, and learnt to imitate its language. Except, indeed, in some few passages where we are tempted to suspect a taint of false prophecy⁸, or fictitious additions to the accounts of sacred history⁹, there is nothing in the book inconsistent with the accounts, or unfavourable to the designs of revelation: it offers much sublime admonition to the princes and leaders of mankind; it refers with great effect to the miracles of God¹; it paints in very eloquent description, the folly and consequences of idolatry; overthrows many pernicious errors, and delivers just information concerning a future life and judgment. The first six chapters, which form, as it were, a preface to the book, are a kind of para-

⁷ Prov. viii. The magnificent description which Solomon here gives of the Divine wisdom, was often applied by the ancient Christians to that eternal wisdom which was revealed to mankind in Christ, or rather to our Saviour's person, who was himself the eternal word and wisdom of the Father. But it was, perhaps, only generally applicable to God's revealed wisdom. Vid. Just. Mart. p. 267. edit. Thirlb.

⁸ Ch. viii. 20. which seems to refer to the notion of the transmigration of souls. Arnald. et Calmet.

⁹ Ch. xvi. 17—19. xvii. 3—6.

¹ Ch. xix. 7.

phrase of the first nine chapters of the book of Proverbs; in the seventh and eighth chapters, the author proposes himself as an example, under the name of Solomon; the ninth chapter is a paraphrase of the prayer which Solomon made to the Lord at the beginning of his reign²; and from the tenth chapter to the end is a continuation of the same prayer dilated; which, though extended to a considerable length by the intermixture of nice disquisitions and extraneous discourse, is still apparently imperfect. The style of this book is varied; it is often tragical, and sometimes turgid, and not seldom elegant and sublime; it abounds in epithets and poetical imagery. The author often imitates the sententious periods of Solomon, but with less success, says Bishop Lowth, than the writer of the succeeding book³.

² 1 Kings iii. 6—9.

³ Prælect. Poet. 24.

OF THE

BOOK OF ECCLESIASTICUS.

THIS Book, like the preceding, has sometimes been considered as scriptural and as the production of Solomon, from its resemblance to the inspired works of that writer¹. In the Latin church it was esteemed the last of the five books attributed to him. It is cited as the work of that enlightened King by several of the Fathers; was joined with his books in most of the copies; and like them is written with a kind of metrical arrangement in the Alexandrian manuscript, being supposed to have been produced originally in metre². Still, however, it must have been composed long after the time of Solomon, who with the succeeding prophets that flourished before and after the captivity is here mentioned³; since the high-priest Simon, who lived a little before the Maccabees, is spoken of; since the words of Malachi are cited⁴; and since the author

¹ Origen. Homil. xi. in Lib. Jesu-Nave. tom. ii. p. 425. edit. Paris, 1733. See also p. 340. et 488. Chrysost. adv. Judæos, p. 683. tom. i. edit. Paris, 1718. See also p. 106. et 397. Cyprian de Mortalitat. p. 231. Epist. 65. p. 113. edit. Paris, 1726. et Hilar. in Psa. cxl. p. 536. edit. Paris, 1693.

² Epiphani. de Pond. et Mensur.

³ Chap. xlvii. 13, &c.

⁴ Chap. xlviii. 10. from Malach. iv. 6.

describes himself under circumstances which could not have occurred to Solomon⁵. The book, therefore, can only be supposed to contain some scattered sentiments of Solomon, industriously collected⁶ with other materials for the work, by an Hebrew writer styled Jesus; who professes himself the author⁷, and who is represented to have so been by his grandson⁸; but who, indeed, imitates the didactic style of Solomon, and like him assumes the character of a preacher.

Jesus was, as we learn from the same authority, a man who had travelled much in the pursuit of knowledge; who was very conversant with the Scriptures, and desirous of producing, in imitation of the sacred writers, some useful work for the instruction of mankind, and who, having collected together many valuable sentences from the Prophets and other writers, compiled them into one work with some original additions of his own composition. What this Jesus produced in the Syriac, or vulgar Hebrew of his time, his grandson translated into Greek for the benefit of his countrymen in Egypt, who by long disuse had forgotten the Hebrew tongue. To this grandson we are indebted

⁵ Chap. xxxiv. 11, 12. li. 6.

⁶ Drus. *Observat. lib. i. c. xviii. p. 1338.* apud Crit. *Sacr. tom. viii.* Athanasius calls Jesus *Ῥπαδὸς τοῦ Σολομῶνος*, Salomonis *Assescla*. Vid. *Athan. Synop. p. 116. tom. ii. edit. Par. 1627.* Bartolocc. *Bib. Rabb. tom. i. p. 249. edit. Rom. 1675.*

⁷ Chap. i. 27.

⁸ See the second prologue. This prologue is in all the copies of the Vulgate, and in the Roman edition of the Greek. It is probably the authentic work of the grandson, though it is not in the Syriac or Arabic versions. Vid. *Euseb. in Chron. Hieron. in Dan. ix. Epiphan. Hæres. 8.* In the Roman edition of the Greek it is entitled simply "the Prologue."

for the possession of a valuable work, of which the original is now lost, though St. Jerom professes to have seen it⁹. The copies, of which Munster, and Paulus Fagius speak, were probably Ben Sira's alphabet, or modern translations from the Greek.

It has been a subject of some dispute, whether the grandfather or grandson were the person who should be described as the son of Sirach. The book is entitled the Wisdom of Jesus, the son of Sirach; and this title it should seem must apply to the author, as the book cannot be supposed to have been denominated by the name of the translator. The author, likewise, describes himself as the son of Sirach in the fifty-first chapter, which appears to be the work of the same author¹. The translator who is usually called Jesus, is likewise styled the son of Sirach by Epiphanius²; and by the author of the anonymous prologue, which is supposed to have been written by Athanasius, as it is extracted from the Synopsis attributed to him, and prefixed to this book³, in some Greek, and in all the Latin edi-

⁹ Hieron. Præf. in lib. Solom. St. Jerom informs us, that the Hebrew copy which he saw was entitled Parables (or Proverbs), on account probably of the proverbial and sententious form in which its precepts were conveyed.

¹ Grotius, without any reason, attributes it, together with the three last verses of the foregoing chapter, to the grandson.

Epiphan. de Pond. et Mensur. Isidor. de Eccles. Offic. in lib. i. c. xii. Hieron. in Dan. cap. ix. p. 1112. tom. iii. August. de Doct. Christ. lib. ii. cap. viii. § 13. p. 18. tom. iii. edit. Antwerp, 1700. Grotius, Drusius, &c.

This prologue is prefixed to the Greek in the Antwerp Polyglot, and to some other Greek editions; but it is not in the Roman edition, nor in the most ancient copies, nor in the Arabic or Syriac versions. Its accounts can therefore be received only as of the same authority as that of the Synopsis, which was probably written by

tions, as well as in our translation. It is not improbable, that the younger Jesus might likewise have been a son of Sirach, as names were often entailed in families.

Genebrard ⁴ says, that Jesus, the author of this book, was a priest of the race of Joshua, the son of Josedech ⁵; and Isidore represents him as his grandson, though he must have lived much too long after Joshua to have been so nearly related to him ⁶. Huet and Calmet, in agreement with some Rabbinical writers, suppose that the author was the same person with Ben Sira, a Jewish writer, of whom an alphabet of Proverbs is extant, both in Chaldee and Hebrew ⁷, which corresponds in so many particulars with the book of Ecclesiasticus, that Huet, and other writers, have considered it as a corrupted copy of the Hebrew work of Jesus. If, however, as others contend, Ben Sira is to be considered as a different person, and according to traditionary accounts, the nephew of Jeremiah ⁸, it must be admitted that the author of Ecclesiasticus has borrowed

Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, who lived between A.D. 458 and 490, above a century after the great Athanasius.

⁴ Chronol. p. 16.

⁵ Haggai i. 1.

⁶ Some Greek Manuscripts make the author a grandson of Eleazar. Vid. Drus. ad chap. i. 3. Others make him a contemporary with Eleazar; and some writers pretend that he was one of the seventy interpreters sent by Eleazar to Ptolemy Philadelphus; a person of the name of Jesus being mentioned in the list given by Aristæas. Huet supposes that Jesus, the grandson, was the same person with Josephus, the son of Uziel, and grandson of Ben Sira.

⁷ Both were published with a Latin translation by Fagius ad Isna, in 1542. Ben Sira's book is said to have been received by the Jews, among the Hagiographa of secondary rank. Vid. David in Baba Cama, C. Hachobel.

⁸ Buxtorf. et Bartolocc. Bib. Rabbin.

many things from his work ; since such a conformity as exists between them could scarcely be accidental⁹.

The author of this book is by Calmet and others supposed to have flourished so late as under the Pontificate of Onias the Third ; and to have fled into Egypt on account of the afflictions brought on his country by Antiochus Epiphanes, about 171 years before Christ, to whose persecution they conceive that some parts of the book refer¹. The passages, however, produced in support of this opinion, do not bear any direct relation to particular calamities, but contain only general supplications for prosperity, and for the triumphant restoration of the Jewish tribes, which the people expected to experience in the advent of the Messiah. The eulogium contained in the fiftieth chapter was probably designed for Simon the Just, the first high-priest of the name of Simon, whom the author appears to have remembered, and who died A.M. 3711²; and as the younger Jesus went into Egypt in the reign of Euergetes the Second, surnamed Physcon, who was admitted

⁹ Cornel. a Lapid. Com. in Ecclus.

¹ Chap. xxxvi. Vid. also ch. xxxiv. 12. xxxv. and li. which, however, contain no particulars exclusively applicable to the time of Antiochus.

² Two Simons, both high-priests, are mentioned by Josephus ; the first who died 292 years before Christ, is spoken of in *Antiq. Jud. lib. xii. c. ii. p. 512.* Euseb. in *Chron.* Genebr. Cornel. a Lapid. Drusius, et *Prid. ann. 292.* He is described to be the last of the Great Synagogue, and is supposed to have revised and completed the Canon. He is celebrated in this book. The second Simon was the son of Onias the Second. See *Antiq. Jud. lib. xii. c. iv. p. 530.* He opposed Ptolemy Philopater's entrance into the Sanctuary. See 3rd Book of Maccabees. *Prid. ann. 217. p. 82. pars 2.*

to a share of the throne A.M. 3835³, it is more probable, that, agreeably to the calculations of other chronologists, the book was written about A.M. 3772; when the author was, perhaps, about seventy years of age: and that it was translated about sixty or sixty-three years after⁴: nearly at the time that it is supposed by Calmet to have been written.

The translator professes to have found the book after he had continued some time in Egypt⁵, where it might have been deposited by his grandfather⁶; it was called *Ecclesiasticus*⁷ by the Latins, which title, though nearly synonymous with the Preacher, was designed to distinguish it from the book of Ecclesiastes. In the Greek it is called the Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach⁸.

³ He reigned twenty-four years in conjunction with Philometor, and twenty-eight years alone after the death of his brother. Vid. Usher's Annals, ann. A.C. 145. Vaillant in Ptolem. VII. ad an. Lagid. 192. Prid. Con. A.C. 169.

⁴ Usher supposes it to have been translated 38 years earlier.

⁵ It is uncertain from what æra the eighth and thirtieth year mentioned in the prologue is reckoned. It might be that of the translator's age. If we suppose it to have been the thirty-eighth year of Ptolemy's reign, above 100 years must have intervened between the time of writing and that of translating the book.

⁶ It is probable that Jesus by *ἐφόμοιον*, or *ἀφόμοιον*, meant a copy of this book. In the anonymous prologue, it is said, that Jesus received the book from his father, which perhaps he might, either in Egypt or elsewhere; for he does not say absolutely that he found the book in Egypt, but that being in Egypt, and having found the book, he judged it worthy a translation.

⁷ Some think that it was called *Ecclesiasticus* by way of eminence, as the most valuable of the ecclesiastical books.

⁸ In the Roman edition it is improperly styled the Wisdom of Sirach.

It is much to be admired for the excellency of its precepts, and not one of the apocryphal books affords such store of admirable instruction as this. But it has no title to be considered as an inspired work: though it contains many passages derived from the sacred writings, and especially from those of Solomon⁹; and some which have a slight resemblance to parts of the New Testament¹, by accidental coincidence of thought and expression; or by concurrent imitation of the early writers of the Old Testament. The book never was in the Hebrew canon; nor was it received by the primitive church of Christ, since it is not in the most ancient and authentic catalogues, and is expressly represented as an uncanonical book by many ancient writers². It is however, referred to with great reverence by the Fathers of the Greek and Latin church³, many of whom endeavoured to strengthen their religious opinions by the sentiments contained in a book so deservedly and so generally approved. It is cited as Scripture in a vague sense of the word by many provincial synods, and received as canonical in a lower degree by some

⁹ Ecclus. passim, et Huet, prop. 4. § 11. p. 266.

¹ Huet, and marginal references in our Bible.

² Prol. of Jesus, Can. Apost. Can. 85. p. 43. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. xxvi. lib. vi. c. xxv. Athan. Epist. 39, et Synop. Epiphan. de Pond. et Mens. Philast. de Hæres. Prodiant. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xvii. c. xx. Hieron. Præf. in lib. Solom. Niceph. lib. vi. c. xxxiii.

³ Constit. Apost. lib. vii. c. xi. Clem. Alex. Pædag. lib. ii. p. 180. et 187. Origen in lib. Judic. Hom. iii. p. 464. et cont. Cels. lib. vi. Cyprian. de Hæres. Baptiz. p. 333. Epiphan. Hæres. 76. cont. Aetium. August. lib. de Grat. et lib. Arbit. cap. ii. § 3. p. 719. tom. x. edit. Paris, 1690.

councils and writers ⁴ towards the close and after the fourth century ⁵. But it was universally considered as inferior to the books derived from the Hebrew canon, till received as of equal authority by the unadvised and indiscriminating decree of the Council of Trent ⁶.

All the copies of this book now extant vary considerably from each other; and the Latin version, of which the date and author are uncertain, has many repetitions and additions introduced seemingly as paraphrastical ornaments by the translator, or some subsequent writer. The Greek version having been made early and immediately from the original, is most entitled to consideration. This translation, however, seems to have been composed with too servile adherence to the original, and is often obscure.

The translator was sensible of its defects, and apprehensive, as he has been since accused, of misinterpreting the sense of his author ⁷. There has been a derangement of chapters between the thirtieth and thirty-sixth ⁸; which, as well as many corruptions and variations, may be imputed to the carelessness of transcribers ⁹. The old English versions, as those of Coverdale, and the Bishops' Bible, by too rigid adherence to the Vulgate, adopted many errors. Our last translators, though not servilely attached to any copy, seem chiefly to have regarded the Complutensian: which though suspected

⁴ St. Augustin states it to have been received into authority principally by the Western Church, though it was not regarded by the learned as the work of Solomon. *De Civit. Dei*, lib. xvii. c. 20. p. 483. tom. vii. Paris, 1685.

⁵ Concil. Carth. 3 Can. 47.

⁶ Concil. Trid. Sess. 4.

⁷ Prologue of Jesus, and Drusius.

⁸ Calmet Comm. in chap. xxx. 27.

⁹ Hæschelius.

of conforming its Greek to the Vulgate, is by Dr. Grabe¹ mentioned with praise, as derived from the most ancient manuscripts. Their version is, however, in some places inaccurate and obscure, and sometimes erroneous.

The work begins with an eulogium on Wisdom ; and many important instructions are delivered as far as the twenty-fourth chapter, when Wisdom herself is introduced, and is supposed to continue to speak, to the fifteenth verse of the forty-second chapter. Here the collection of wise sayings, which are obviously written in imitation of the Proverbs of Solomon, concludes : and the author solemnly enters upon a pious hymn, in which he celebrates God's Wisdom, in a strain highly rapturous and sublime, and finishes his work with a panegyric on the illustrious characters of his own nation, and a prayer or thanksgiving for some deliverance which the author had personally experienced².

This division, says Valesius³, is a manifest copy of the method and order of Solomon's writings : and presents an imitation of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles ; though some maintain that the author left his work imperfect⁴. The book contains a fine system of

¹ Grabe's Proleg. cap. iii. § 1. tom. iii.

² Prideaux, with Grotius, attributes this prayer to the grandson, because Ptolemy Physcon was a greater tyrant than his predecessors, in whose reigns the grandfather might have resided in Egypt ; but the author speaks only of false accusation to the king, which by no means implies that the king countenanced the persecution ; and, indeed, if he had, the author would hardly have escaped from, or at least have complained of the cruelty. The grandfather might likewise have been accused before a king of some other country.

³ Not. ad Script. Eccles. lib. iv. c. xxii.

⁴ The anonymous prologue says, " almost perfected."

moral, political, and theological precepts; arranged in a less desultory manner than the Proverbs of Solomon; and distributed under certain heads, which seem to have been formerly classed under different titles: many of which are still extant in some of the Greek copies. Some learned men have pretended to discover in the book the more secret and abstruse wisdom ascribed to Solomon, and taught in the schools of the Jewish doctors⁵. The advocates of the superstitions of the Romish church have attempted to vindicate masses and prayers for the dead, from a passage in this book, which, however, relates only to a liberal regard to the interment of the dead, and consolatory largesses to their surviving friends and the poor. Other parts have been thought to imply the notion that some were exempt from the corruption of sin⁶, and that atonement for transgressions may be made by good works operating to the repentance of others⁷. It is chiefly valuable for the familiar lessons which it affords for the direction of manners in every circumstance and condition, and for the general precepts which it communicates towards the daily regulation of life. Its maxims are explained by much variety of illustration, and occasionally exemplified in the description of character. The ancient writers entitled it Πανάρετος, considering it as a complete compendium of moral virtues; and, perhaps, no uninspired production ever displayed a morality more comprehensive, or more captivating and consistent with the revealed laws of God. The book imparts, also, an instructive detail of the sentiments

⁵ Chap. vii. 33. See also Lee's Dissertat. on the Second Book of Esdras, p. 58. See also Jerem. xvi. 7. Tobit. iv. 17.

Chap. xiii. 24.

⁷ Chap. iii. 3. 30. xvii. 22. xxxv. 3.

and opinions that prevailed in the time of the author; the impatience for the appearance of the expected Messiah^s; and the firm confidence in the hope of a future life and judgment, which had been built upon the assurances of the Law and the Prophets. It serves likewise to prove, that as the Gospel dispensation approached, the Jews were prepared for its reception, by being more enlightened to understand the spiritual import and figurative character of the Law.

^s Chap. xxxvi. 1—17. the first part of which is cited by St. Augustin as a kind of prophetic prayer fulfilled by the advent of Christ, but as not to be produced with confidence, inasmuch as the book was not in the Jewish Canon. Vid. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xvii. c. xx. See also chap. i. 22, 23. These pious supplications for some future blessings indistinctly described, proceeded from a confidence in the promises of the Prophets; and the Jews who, in the expectation of their Messiah, had at first regard only to one advent, looked to the full accomplishment of the prophecies in his arrival, and, therefore, allude in their prayers to the expected conversion of the Gentiles; the final congregation of the tribes; and their triumphant victories, which remain yet to be fulfilled. The prayer spoken of in chap li. 10, is supposed by Whittaker to contain an acknowledgment of the second person in the Godhead, and is adduced as a proof of the belief of the Jews in that essential doctrine, before the incarnation of our Lord. See Origin of Arianism disclosed, p. 122.

OF THE
BOOK OF BARUCH,
WITH THE
EPISTLE OF JEREMIAH.

THE author of this Book professes himself to be Baruch; a person of very illustrious birth, and distinguished by his attachment to Jeremiah. He had been employed by that prophet as a scribe or secretary, to write his prophecies¹; and on some occasions to read them to those against whom they were directed. St. Jerom, Grotius, and others, are, however, of opinion, that the book was not written by Baruch, or in the Hebrew language; but by some Hellenistical Jew, who assumed the character of Baruch; and that the letter which forms a part of the book, was fabricated by his own invention². But there is, perhaps, not any sufficient reason to dispute the authenticity of the five first chapters; and the sixth chapter, which is probably spurious, did not originally belong to this book. The

¹ Chap. i. 1. Jerem. passim. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. ix. p. 451. and chapter on Jeremiah in this work. Josephus styles him μαθητήν.

² Hieron. Procem. in Com. et Grot. Com. in Baruch.

Greek version of these five chapters abounds with Hebraisms; if written in Hebrew, they are not now extant in that language, nor were ever admitted into the Hebrew canon³: because Baruch, however he might have aspired to the prophetic character, and have sought great things for himself⁴, was not endowed with the gift of inspiration; though he was on one occasion made the subject of a divine revelation, and honoured by a consolatory assurance from God.

The author, in consistency with the character of Baruch, whether rightly or falsely assumed, describes himself as the son of Nerias, and as the grandson of Maasias, who were men of eminence in their country. He affirms, that he wrote the book at Babylon, in the fifth year, and in the seventh day of the month⁵, after the Chaldæans had taken and burnt Jerusalem; by which must be understood the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, which corresponds with the fifth year of the reign of Zedekiah, and A.M. 3409: when Baruch accompanied his brother Seraias to Babylon⁶, who was

³ Hieron. Prolog. in Jeremiam.

⁴ Jerem. xlv. 5. which some conceive to allude to a fruitless desire of Baruch that he might be favoured with the prophetic spirit. Vid. Maimon. More Nevoch. p. ii. cap. xxxii. p. 286.

⁵ The name of the month is not specified; it probably means the month Cisleu, or November, the same month in which Jerusalem was taken five years before.

⁶ Some would place Baruch's journey to Babylon in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, when Baruch was carried into Egypt; when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed; when no high-priest remained, and no feasts were celebrated, contrary to the circumstances of the period of this book. The fifth year cannot be referred to Nebuchadnezzar, who had obtained his empire seven years before Jehoiachin was carried into captivity.

deputed from Zedekiah to solicit the restoration of the sacred vessels of the temple, which had been carried away among the spoil⁷. It has been objected as inconsistent with this account, that Jerusalem is, in this book, represented as burnt, and in circumstances of distress greater than should seem to have occurred at the time that Jehoiakim was taken prisoner and slain. But allowing for those aggravations which are customary in the description of great afflictions, there is no particular in the detail of circumstances that might not have happened during the siege of Jerusalem in the reign of Jehoiakim: when the Jews might have seen part of their city burnt, and have suffered from the most cruel extremities of famine⁸.

It is probable that Baruch was more immediately commissioned by Jeremiah to utter at Babylon those prophecies which were entrusted to Seraias⁹; and that he actually did read to Jehoiachin, and others whom they concerned, the prophecies contained in the fiftieth and fifty-first chapters of Jeremiah, which promised deliverance to the Jews from their captivity, and future destruction to Babylon: though when Baruch speaks of having read the words of this book to the people by

⁷ The vessels which Seraias obtained, appear to have been silver vessels, which Zedekiah had made to supply the place of the golden vessels which had been carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, the rapacity of the conquerors having soon afterwards seized on these also, vid. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7—10. Jeremiah had declared that the golden vessels should not soon be brought again, chap. xxvii. 46. and the most valuable were not restored till the expiration of the captivity. Vid. Dan. v. 2. Ezra i. 7. Grotius considers the latter part of ch. i. 8. as an interpolation.

⁸ Ch. i. 2. ii. 2—5.

⁹ Jer. li. 59—64. See also p. 369 of this work.

the river נַח¹, he seems to allude only to the epistle which forms the chief subject of this book, which was sent by Jehoiachin and his associate captives in Babylon, to Joachim, the son of Chelcias², and the people at Jerusalem; for Baruch being probably employed to compose the letter, may well be conceived to have read it to the king and the nobles for their approbation.

The captives, who appear to have been tutored by affliction to a sense of their own unworthiness, and to have felt a pious satisfaction at the success of the deputation of Seraias, sent back with the sacred vessels a collection of money to purchase burnt-offerings and incense for the altar of the Lord; and transmitted with it a letter to their countrymen, in which they expressed their sentiments of humility and repentance, and their confident hopes of that restoration which the Prophets had encouraged them to expect, and which prefigured the future glories of Jerusalem³.

¹ Ch. i. 4. This river is not mentioned by geographers. As the Hebrew word נַח, which might have been the original, means pride, some writers have considered it as a figurative expression for the Euphrates, descriptive of the turgid swell of the river, on which some of the Jewish captives were placed. Vid. Jerem. li. 63. Bochart thinks that the word should be Sori or Suri, (which in the Hebrew is written in nearly the same manner) because there was on the banks of the Euphrates, a city called Sura or Sora (as also Mahasia) from which that part of the Euphrates might have taken its name. Vid. Bochart. Phaleg. lib. i. c. viii. p. 39. edit. Cadom. Cellarii Geogr.

² This person was probably the same with Eliakim, or Hilkiash, who was high priest under Manasseh and Josiah, and perhaps under their successors. Vid. Isaiah xxii. 20. 2 Kings xxii. 4—8. xxiii. 4. 24. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9. and Calmet. Dissert. sur l'Ordre et la Succession des Grand Prêtres des Juifs, tom. iii. p. 447.

³ Irenæus Adv. Hæres. lib. v. c. xxxv. p. 458. edit. Grabe, and note ¹⁰.

The letter, which, after a short historical preface, begins at the tenth verse of the first chapter, contains a confession which the captives recommended to their brethren, to be used upon solemn days. It exhorts them to pray for the life of Nebuchadnezzar, who had complied with their request, and possibly been indulgent to the captives; to acknowledge that God's judgments were righteous, and that by their own disobedience they had provoked the accomplishment of those curses which the Almighty had threatened⁴, and which they then experienced; and, lastly, to supplicate his mercies with sorrow and contrition. This prayer was probably used, also, by the captives themselves, and the sentiments which it contains were similar to those which Daniel and Nehemiah continued to inculcate during and after the captivity⁵. In the third chapter is contained a passage⁶, which Grotius hastily pronounces to be an addition by some Christian; and which others consider as an inspired prophecy of the incarnation and human intercourse of the Messiah; but which may be regarded as a personification of Divine wisdom, which had manifested itself to the Patriarchs, and revealed its precepts in converse with mankind⁷. It has, however, so far a prophetic cast, as it is imitative of passages⁸ which, under praises of wisdom, figura-

⁴ Deut. xxviii. 15—53. and the Prophets passim.

⁵ Comp. chap. i. 15—17. with Dan. ix. 5. 7. 9. Chap. ii. 7—11. with Dan. ix. 13—15. Chap. ii. 15. with Dan. ix. 19. Chap. ii. 19. with Dan. ix. 18. Chap. i. 15, 16. with Nehem. ix. 32. 34. Chap. ii. 11, 12. with Nehemiah ix. 10.

⁶ Comp. chap. iii. 35—37. with John i. 14.

⁷ Exod. xxiv. 9—18.

⁸ Comp. chap. iii. 37. with Prov. viii. 31. The passage is per-

tively celebrate that eternal wisdom which dwelt among us in the person of the Son of God. So, likewise, Baruch speaks with an almost prophetic confidence of those blessings which Jeremiah and other Prophets might have taught him to expect from “the everlasting Saviour” who should soon appear⁹; of that joy which should come from the East¹; and of the triumphant glory with which Jerusalem should be exalted, and her sons assembled from all kingdoms in righteousness and peace. These, however, were prospects of future exultation with which all in captivity must have consoled their affliction; they were general characters of the kingdom of the Messiah which every one conversant with the sacred writings was capable of describing, and by no means conferred the stamp of inspiration on the book, which was not received as canonical by the Jews, or the primitive church of Christ², though it be cited with respect, and even as Divine Scripture, by many of the earlier writers³.

Some, indeed, have imagined, that St. Athanasius⁴,

haps in this respect, cited as prophetic by St. Augustin, who says, that it was by a more prevailing opinion attributed to Jeremiah. Vid. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xxxiii. p. 515.

⁹ Chap. iv. 22—30.

¹ Comp. ch. iv. 36, 37. with Jerem. xxiii. 5. and Zech. vi. 12. where the word “Branch” is in the Septuagint rendered Ἀνατολή, the East. Vid. also Ezek. xliii. 4. and Mal. iv. 2.

² Hieron. Prol. in Jerem. p. 526. edit. Par. 1704.

³ Clem. Alex. Pæd. lib. ii. c. iii. p. 189. Euseb. Demon. Evang. lib. vi. c. xix. p. 294. Ambrose de Fide, lib. i. c. iii. p. 449. tom. ii. edit. Par. 1690. Hilar. Prol. in Psalm. p. 9. edit. Par. 1693. Cyril. in Jul. lib. viii. p. 267. edit. Lipsiæ, 1696.

⁴ Athan. Epist. 39. vol. i. pars Secunda, p. 962. It is described as apocryphal in the Synopsis, vol. ii. p. 201. edit. Par. 1698.

and St. Cyril, received it as canonical. In the catalogues, it is true, of the sacred books handed down to us by these Fathers, as also in the Greek copies of the canons of the Council of Laodicea, Baruch and the epistle are enumerated with Jeremiah and the Lamentations; but it is probable, and generally supposed, that by this exegetical detail, were meant only those parts of Jeremiah which we receive as inspired; that the epistle in the twenty-ninth chapter of his prophecies is specified as a distinct part of the work; and that Baruch is mentioned because he was considered as a collector of Jeremiah's writings, and by some thought to have added the fifty-second chapter to his prophecies. It is certain that Baruch and the epistle are not mentioned in the catalogue of St. Augustin, nor in that of the Council of Carthage⁵. Baruch, with the rest of the apocryphal books, is expressly excluded from the catalogues received from antiquity, by the Greek church⁶; and the members of the Council of Trent were more perplexed, and deliberated longer about the admission of Baruch, than of any of the apocryphal books⁷, because they acknowledged (as it was not in the Latin copies of the catalogue) that it was not received by the Council of Laodicea; by that of Carthage; or by the

⁵ Concil. Carthag. Ann. 397. Can. 47. et Cod. Can. Eccles. African. Can. 24. p. 1061. in neither of which is Baruch mentioned. It is, however, possible, that the council or councils to which these canons belonged, received Baruch as canonical in a secondary sense; for though it is not mentioned in the list, it might be included under the name of Jeremiah, and received as the other apocryphal books.

⁶ Metrophanes Crytopylus Epitom. Confess. Orient.

⁷ History of the Council of Trent, lib. ii.

Roman Pontiffs⁸; and the Tridentine Fathers were withholden from rejecting it, principally, it should seem, by the consideration that parts of it were read in the service of the church.

Many ancient writers have cited Baruch under the name of Jeremiah⁹; not that they believed that what we now possess under the name of Baruch was actually composed by Jeremiah, but that they considered Baruch as a disciple of the Prophet; and imagined, perhaps, that the epistle in the last chapter of his book was really written by Jeremiah, to whose canonical works it was formerly joined. In the Romish church, the book is read at the feast of Pentecost, under the name of Jeremiah¹; but many of the Romanists do not scruple to deny its authority², and it seems to contain some passages not likely to have proceeded from an inspired writer, or from Baruch³.

Besides the Greek copy of this book, there are two Syriac versions, one of which corresponds with and the other differs much from the Greek⁴.

⁸ It is not specified in the suspected epistle of Pope Innocent the First. Vid. Epist. 3. ad Exuper.

⁹ Irenæus Hæres. lib. v. c. xxxv. Clem. Alex. Pædag. lib. i. c. x. p. 152. Chrysost. cont. Judæ. p. 559. tom. i. edit. Paris, 1718. Ambrose in Psalm cxviii. Serm. 18. p. 1194. tom. i. edit. Paris. Basil Advers. Eunom. lib. iv. p. 294. edit. Paris, 1721. Cyprian. Testimon. lib. ii. c. vi. p. 286. edit. Paris, 1726. See also de Orat. Domin. p. 205.

¹ Office du Samedi de la Pentecote, Prophétie, vi.

² Driedo Script. et Dogm. ad Eccles. lib. i. cap. ult. Lyran. Dionys. Carthus.

³ Compare chap. vi. 3. with Jerem. xxix. 10.

⁴ The Latin translation also differs much from the Greek.

The letter which constitutes the sixth chapter of this book is in some editions of the Greek, and in the Arabic, which is translated from the Greek, subjoined to the Lamentations. It is admitted by Theodoret in his commentary, and is not to be found in several Greek manuscripts, and in none of the Hebrew copies of Jeremiah's writings. It is probably a spurious work, and is rejected as such by St. Jerom⁵; though cited by Cyprian as an inspired work of Jeremiah⁶, and by others, as an epistle of that Prophet; and supposed by some to be alluded to by the author of the Second Book of Maccabees⁷, who, however, only speaks of Jeremiah's general exhortations against idolatry. The letter certainly never was in the Jewish canon. It was probably fabricated by some writer who had studied the character and writings of Jeremiah; and it contains judicious and spirited strictures upon idolatry, of which the vanity is forcibly exposed. There is, besides these works in the Syriac language, an epistle attributed to Baruch, which is called his first epistle; and feigned to have been written to the nine tribes and a half, said to be carried beyond the Euphrates. It appears to be a spurious production of a writer acquainted with the Gospel doctrines; and is interspersed with many fictitious inventions. It was possibly brought forward⁸ by some of those monks, who during the first ages of the Christian church, flocked in numbers to inhabit the deserts of Syria.

Baruch, after the execution of his commission, ap-

⁵ Hieron. Prol. in Jerem. Jerom calls it *ψευδεπίγραφον*, tom. iii. p. 526. edit. Par. 1704.

Cyprian. de Orat. Domin. p. 205.

⁷ 2 Macc. ii. 1, 2.

⁸ Huet. Demonst. Evang. Prop. 4. p. 215.

pears to have returned to Jerusalem; where, in conjunction with Jeremiah, he encountered much persecution, and witnessed the total destruction of Jerusalem; after which he was drawn by Johanan, with Jeremiah, and the remnant of Judah, into Egypt⁹; from which country he possibly retired, since Josephus states that God had revealed to Jeremiah, the impending fate of those who had fled thither; and some pretend that he went a second time to Babylon¹, and died there, about A. M. 3428². In the martyrologies his death is placed on the 28th of September, apparently without any authority.

⁹ Jerem. xliii. 5—7. Hieron. in Esaïam.

¹ Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. ix. p. 454. edit. Hudson, see also Jerem. xliv. 27—30.

² Talm. Megill. cap. i. R. Abrah. Zacut. in Lib. Juchas.

OF THE
SONG OF THE
THREE CHILDREN.

IN some copies of the Greek version of Theodotion, and in the vulgar Latin edition of the Bible, this book is inserted between the twenty-third and twenty-fourth verses of the third chapter of Daniel; as at the beginning of the book is prefixed, the History of Susannah, and at the end is added, that of the destruction of Bel and the Dragon; but none of these additions are to be found in any Hebrew copy, nor do they appear ever to have existed in the Hebrew or Chaldaic language¹. The pretended Hebraisms which have been alleged to prove their authenticity, are such as an Hellenistical Jew might be expected to have used; or were, perhaps, designedly adopted to facilitate the reception of spurious works. These apocryphal parts appear to have been first inserted in the Septuagint version²; and they were certainly in Theodotion's edition, though there distinguished by an obelus, to intimate that they were

¹ Origen Epist. ad African, p. 14. tom. i. edit. Par. note A.

² The Song of the Three Children is not in the Vatican copy of the Septuagint. Comp. also p. 553 of this work.

not in the Hebrew. It is probable, that one and the same author invented, or composed from traditional accounts, all these apocryphal additions, which he interwove with the genuine work of Daniel. Annexed to, or incorporated with the inspired book, they gradually rose into reputation; and being safe from censure under the sanction of the Prophet's name, and the approbation of the church, which suffered them to be read for instruction of manners, they were perhaps, sometimes considered in a loose and popular representation, as a part of the genuine work of Daniel.

It is, however, universally admitted, that they never were in the Hebrew canon ³, and they were omitted as spurious by Eusebius ⁴ and Apollinarius. St. Jerom, who considers them as apocryphal, professes to have retained them with a mark prefixed, lest he should appear to the unskilful, to have rescinded a great part of Daniel's book; since, though they were not in the Hebrew, they were generally dispersed and known ⁵; and, under the character of a Jew, endeavours to expose the absurdity of some particulars which they contain. There can, indeed, be no doubt that they were produced long after the time of Daniel, by some writer desirous of imitating and of embellishing the

³ Hieron. Præf. in Dan. Calmet's Preface in Dan. Du Pin. Diss. Prelim. lib. i. c. i.

⁴ Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. iv. c. 26. Lib. vi. c. 25.

⁵ Præf. in Daniel. When St. Jerom, in his apology against Ruffinus, professes to have delivered only the sentiments of the Jews, and not his own, with respect to these additional parts of Daniel, he does not retract his sentiments, but evades the discussion of their authority; and as the Scholiast observes, "Vafre respondet." Vid. Apol. adv. Ruff. lib. ii. p. 431. tom. iv. edit. Par. 1706. et Scholia.

sacred history, though as they were not expressly severed from the canonical part by any positive decree, they were received by the decision of the Council of Trent as genuine, and in every respect canonical⁶. It is uncertain at what time they were composed. They are in the Arabic and Syriac version of the Scriptures, and are mentioned very early by Christian writers.

The present book, which contains only a song in praise of God, said to have been uttered by the three companions of Daniel when thrown by Nebuchadnezzar into a burning furnace, is to be admired for its instruction and tendency. These righteous persons, whose reputation was founded on the authentic accounts of Daniel⁷, appear by their pious fortitude to have contributed with the Prophet to the final suppression of idolatry. The veneration entertained for their character, of which the memory was highly celebrated among the Jews⁸, probably induced some Hellenistic Jew to fabricate this ornamental addition to their history. It must have been inserted at a very early period, since it is cited by Cyprian as Scripture⁹. The work is composed with great spirit, and the sentiments attributed to the holy children are consistent with the piety for which

⁶ Concil. Trid. Sess. 4. S. Concil. p. 746. edit. Par. 1672.

⁷ Dan. iii. 23.

⁸ There was an ancient tradition that the Three Children were descendants of Hezekiah. Vid. Nazianz. Orat. 47. Some accounts report, that at last they suffered martyrdom, as also that their bodies, which had been interred at Babylon, were afterwards removed to Rome. Some Jews at Rome boasted of a descent from them.

⁹ Cyprian. de Lapsis, p. 191. edit. Par. 1726. et de Orat. Domin. p. 206.

they were distinguished. The hymn resembles the 148th Psalm of David as to its invocation on all the works of creation to praise and exalt the Lord. It was sung in the service of the primitive church ; and in the Liturgy of Edward the Sixth, the Rubrick enjoined that, during Lent, the Song of the Three Children should be sung instead of the Te Deum.

OF THE

HISTORY OF SUSANNAH.

THIS history, which in some Greek copies is entitled the Judgment of Daniel, is said in the short intimation prefixed to the book by our translators, to have been set apart from the beginning of Daniel, where it stands in the Roman and other editions of the Greek. The Complutensian, however, and some Latin editions, place it as the thirteenth chapter of that book, though certainly with less regard to chronology; for the history, if founded on truth, must be supposed to have taken place when Daniel was very young, and probably, according to some accounts¹, not above twelve years of age.

The book has not any sufficient pretension to be considered as canonical. Some writers, however, and even Origen, if, indeed, we may consider as authentic the epistle attributed to him², have conceived that it might first have been written in the Hebrew or Chaldee, and drawn from the canon by the Jews; and that the original manuscripts were industriously suppressed by

¹ Ignat. Epist. ad Magnesianos, p. 50. edit. Usserii, 1644. Sulpit. Sever. Sac. Hist. lib. ii. p. 265. edit. Lug. Bat. 1647.

² Origen Epist. ad Jul. African.

them, because they contained a relation of particulars discreditable to the Jewish nation. But there is certainly not any foundation for this fancy; for not to mention the impracticability of such a measure³, it is evident, that if the Jews could have been tempted by any solicitude for their national character to mutilate the sacred writings, they would rather have expunged those passages in the inspired books which reflect on them the disgrace—not of individual profligacy, but of general misconduct; or those which record the crimes and occasional offences of favourite characters. But we know with what jealous veneration the canon was preserved inviolate; and perceive in the whole history of a perverse and disobedient people, with what sincerity they composed, and with what fidelity they preserved the records and annals of their country.

The present book appears to have been written in Greek, by some Jew who invented the history, or collected its particulars from traditionary relations, in praise of Daniel. And, indeed, the author has been supposed to betray himself to be a Greek, by some quibbling allusions which do not seem to apply in any other language than the Greek⁴, and which are not likely to be the conceits of a translator. There are two Syriac versions, which differ in their contents.

³ See Introduction, p. 11, &c.

⁴ When the first elder affirms that he beheld Susannah under a tree called *σχίνον*, Daniel playing on the word, declares that the angel should *σχίσαι*, cut him in two; and when the second represents the tree to have been *πρίνον*, Daniel denounces his sentence by an expression from which *πρίνον* was derived, *πρίσαι*. The author, however, of the epistle attributed to Origen, speaks of two “*exemplaria*” as translations, the one by the Seventy, and the other by Theodotion.

The history might, perhaps, have some foundation in truth, though it is not mentioned by Josephus: who, indeed, has not noticed any of the particulars contained in these apocryphal additions to the Book of Daniel. The Prophet is represented in it as a youth in the days of Astyages, though he was carried to Babylon in the reign of Jehoiachim. The Jews in general rejected it as an improbable fable; and remarked, that it was an obvious absurdity to suppose that their countrymen in the captivity were in possession of the power of inflicting punishment on their Judges and Prophets⁵. They had, however, some traditional accounts of the story, and many imagined that it was alluded to by Jeremiah, in the twenty-ninth chapter of his book⁶ of prophecies; where they supposed the two elders to be described under the names of Zedekiah and Ahab; though these persons are there said to have been put to death by the king of Babylon. Origen, who defends the truth of the history⁷, maintains that the Jews were suffered to continue in the exercise of their own judicial laws, during the captivity; and, indeed, they appear to have experienced, in many respects, considerable indulgence from their conquerors. Origen adds, likewise, as a confirmation of the verity of the account, that he had heard from a Jew, as a popular notion, that the elders attempted to mislead Susannah by assurances that the Messiah should spring from her; to which profane

⁵ Hieron. in Jerem. ch. xxix. 22. tom. iii. p. 668.

⁶ Chap. xxix. 22, 23.

⁷ Epist. ad African. "Selecta in Ezechielem," c. vi. p. 416. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. iv. p. 618. Athan. Synops. in Daniel. p. 168. Sixt. Senens. lib. v. Annot. 250. p. 422.

dealing Daniel is supposed to allude in the fifty-seventh verse.

The book seems to have been received with some regard by the Christian church, as containing a relation not inconsistent with the sacred history, or devoid of use, but not as the real production of Daniel; though, as forming an appendage to his work, and as containing an account of circumstances in which he was concerned, it was sometimes cited under his name⁸; and being read by the church, was considered with reverence. Africanus, however, in his epistle to Origen, represents it as confessedly spurious; and Origen himself, or the author of the epistle attributed to him, allows that it had no canonical authority⁹. Eusebius and Apollinarius, in answer to Porphyry, consider it as a part of the prophecy of Habakkuk, the son of Jesus, of the tribe of Levi: for which, however, they do not appear to have any authority, except that of the Greek title prefixed to *Bel and the Dragon*; which probably belonged exclusively to that book¹. It is received, together with the other spurious additions, as canonical by the Romish church; but is suffered to continue in our Bibles only as a work from which moral improvement may be drawn. It illustrates the confidence of truth, and the security of innocence. It exhibits, by an instructive contrast, chastity in its most attractive colours, and licentiousness in its most hideous form.

⁸ Irenæus *Hæres.* lib. iv. c. xlv. edit. Grabe, 1702. See also Tertull. *de Coron.* p. 344. edit. Grabe, 1702. *Milit.* c. iv. Cyprian. *Epist.* 43. Ambrose in c. xiii. Dan.

⁹ Origen *Epist.* ad Jul. African. et Grabe *de Vit. Sept. Interpret.*

¹ Huet. *Prop.* 4. in Dan. p. 225. edit. Par. 1679.

OF THE
HISTORY OF
BEL AND THE DRAGON.

THIS Book, which, in Theodotion's version of Daniel, and in the Vulgate, is annexed as a fourteenth chapter to the Book of Daniel, is properly rejected by our church; as not having been in the Hebrew canon, or received as authentic by the earlier Christians. In the Septuagint version of the Scriptures, into which these spurious parts of Daniel appear to have been first foisted, there was prefixed to this book a title, by which it was called the Prophecy of Habakkuk, the son of Jesus, of the tribe of Levi¹; whence some attributed the book to the Prophet whose inspired work is now extant in the canon; but he lived much earlier than the period which must be assigned to this history, if its truth be admitted. There is reason, however, to suspect that this title was a subsequent addition, by some person who attributed the book to Habakkuk, on account of the agency which is assigned to him in the

¹ Hieron. Præfat. in Dan. tom. iii. p. 1071-2. et adv. Rufin. lib. ii. tom. iv. p. 431. edit. Par. 1704. Sixt. Senens. Bib. Sanct. lib. i. p. 13.

history; and Theodotion was induced, probably, in consequence of such suspicion, to change the title in his edition, though he substituted with as little reason, that of Daniel. If, however, the author's name really were Habakkuk, he was in all probability some Hellenistical Jew, or, at least, a different person from the sacred writer.

There appears to be good ground to conclude, that the book was never extant in the Hebrew language: it may, as Lightfoot has conceived, be a parabolical story, founded on a passage in Jeremiah², who threatens punishment to Bel, the great national idol of Babylon³, in terms that might have suggested the circumstances of his destruction as described in this book.

It is certain, that in all these apocryphal additions, the same Daniel was meant as the Prophet whose writings we possess in the canon; though annexed to the suspected title before mentioned, which, according to St. Jerom, was in the Septuagint copies⁴, there is

² Jerem. li. 44. See also l. 2. Isaiah xlv. 1, 2. comp. Ezra i. 7, 8. v. 14. Seld. Syntag. ii. de Belo et Dragon. c. xvii. p. 403. tom. ii.

³ To the successor of Nimrod was given the name of Bel, which from בעל signifies a Lord; Nimrod was worshipped under the title of "God of Nysa" a district of Arabia. He was called Διό-νυσος by the Greeks, and by the Latins Bacchus, a corruption of Berchush, or rather Ber-cush, ברי-כוש son of Cush or *Coush*. See Bochart's Phaleg. pars ii. lib. i. c. 18. p. 479. Hieron. in Ezech. xxiii. p. 857. et in Osee 11. p. 1247. tom. iii. edit. par. 1704. Herod. lib. i. c. 150. lib. ii. c. xlviii. xlix. Diodor. lib. iii. p. 235. See also lib. i. p. 107. edit. Wetstein.

⁴ St. Jerom calls the book, on account of this inscription, ψευδ-επίγραφον, "falsely entitled." It is rejected as apocryphal under the title of the Book of Habakkuk, (Ambacum) by the author of the Synopsis attributed to Athanasius, tom. ii. p. 201. edit. Par. 1698.

an exordium, or, as it were, a first verse, which describes Daniel improperly as a priest, the son of Obadiah, a guest of the king of Babylon; and inconsistently with the sacred accounts of the Prophet, by which Daniel appears to have been of the tribe of Judah. Still, however, as that title and exordium were probably subsequent additions, we may conceive the author of this book to speak of the Prophet Daniel; but not, as some have imagined, that he gives us only an enlarged account of the events related in the sixth chapter of the authentic book of Daniel: for the circumstances are totally different, except in the particular of his being thrown into the lions' den; and the history recorded in the sacred account is assigned to the reign of Darius: whereas, in the first verse of this book, which undoubtedly is properly placed there ⁵, the events appear to be ascribed to the reign of Cyrus ⁶, which, however, did not commence till the Prophet had attained, probably, his twenty-first or twenty-second year.

Many persons object to the improbability of the circumstances related in this work: as particularly to the

⁵ As it stands in the Arabic, Syriac, and Alexandrian copies.

⁶ It must be observed, that the author in this verse speaks of Cyrus, as of the immediate successor of Astyages: agreeably to the account of Herodotus and his followers. But it is certain, from profane and sacred history, that there was an intermediate king of Media, who reigned two years, called Cyaxares, by Xenophon; and Darius, by Josephus and Daniel. Vid. Xenophon. *Cyropæd.* lib. i. p. 22. edit. Francof. 1596. Joseph. *Antiq.* lib. x. c. xi. § iv. p. 462-3. Dan. v. 31. Messieurs du Port Royal, on a notion that the particulars recorded in this book are such as were not likely to have occurred under Astyages, Darius, or Cyrus, assign the history to the beginning of the reign of Evil-Merodach, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, placing it about A.M. 3442.

destruction of the dragon⁷, and to the conveyance of Habakkuk from Jerusalem to Babylon, merely to furnish a dinner to Daniel. The book, indeed, though it be cited as historical by the most respectable writers in the earliest ages of the church⁸, is considered as fabulous by St. Jerom; and it must be allowed to contain some extravagant and incredible relations. It is, nevertheless, canonized by the Council of Trent. Daniel, probably by detecting the mercenary contrivances of the idolatrous priest at Babylon, and by opening the eyes of the people to the follies of that superstition into which they had been seduced, might have afforded some foundation for the history; and the writer of the book appears to have introduced additional circumstances to enliven the narration; and to illustrate the providence of God in protecting and providing for those who adhere to his service.

⁷ By the dragon is to be understood a serpent, of which, to the triumph of our great deceiver, the worship prevailed among many nations in early times. Vid. Rom. i. 23. Ælian. de Animal. lib. xi. c. xvii. et lib. xvii. c. v. Origen cont. Cels. lib. vi. § 4. p. 632. Valer. Max. lib. i. c. viii. § 2. Ovid. Metam. lib. xv. line 669, &c. Wisd. xi. 15. Fragm. Philo, tom. ii. p. 646. Stillingfl. Orig. Sac. book iii. c. iii. § 18. Messieurs du Port Royal suppose, that the dragon was burst, not by any specific power of the composition, but by the suffocation which it occasioned in a narrow throat. Ben Gorion gives a very different account of the destruction. Vid. lib. i. c. x. ap. Seld. Syntag. ii. c. xvii. p. 404. edit. Lond. 1726.

⁸ Irenæus Hæres. lib. iv. c. v. p. 232. edit. Paris, 1710 of Grabe's edit. c. xi. p. 282. Tertull. de Jejuniis adv. Psychicos, c. vii. p. 548. edit. Par. 1664. De Idololat. c. xviii. p. 96. Cyprian. Epist. 56. de Exhort. Martyrii, p. 92. edit. Par. 1726. Ambrose in Epist. ad Rom. i. 23.

OF THE

PRAYER OF MANASSES.

THIS short prayer is by some attributed to Manasseh, king of Judah. It is said to have been composed by him during the captivity at Babylon; where, agreeably to God's threats by his Prophets¹, he was carried in fetters, by Esarhaddon, king of Assyria and Babylon², in the twenty-second year of his reign, A.M. 3327³, and where, according to some traditionary accounts, being severely treated by the conqueror⁴, and having vainly sought protection from the false deities whom he worshipped, he remembered the advice which he had received from his father in the words of Moses, "When thou art in tribulation, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee"⁵. It appears from the sacred history, that the king was

¹ 2 Kings xxi. 12—16.

² Prid. Connect. A. 680. Part 1st. p. 25. Manass. ch. xix.

³ 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11.

⁴ Some writers fabulously relate, that he was shut up in a heated brazen calf, that on the utterance of this prayer the image burst, and that he was carried by an angel to Jerusalem. Eutych. Alexand. Annal. p. 239. edit. Selden, 1656.

⁵ Deut. iv. 30, 31. Tradit. Hebr. in Paralip. et Targum in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11.

awakened by his afflictions to a due sense of his crimes, and induced to turn with humility and repentance to the God of his fathers; that he prayed unto the Lord, who was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again, after a short captivity, to his kingdom, into Jerusalem: there, as he continued steadfast in his adherence to God, and zealously laboured to extirpate idolatry, he enjoyed a long reign of prosperity and peace; being permitted to continue on the throne fifty-five years⁶. This was a longer period than was allowed to any preceding or subsequent king; and an indulgence which serves to illustrate the efficacy of that contrition of which the sacred writers strongly inculcate the necessity, and minutely detail the effects.

The Prayer in our Bibles, though it contain nothing inconsistent with the circumstances and period of Manasseh, is not supposed to be the authentic production of that monarch. The prayer which he is related in the Book of Chronicles to have uttered, is there said to have been written in the Book of the Kings of Israel, and in the sayings of the Seers⁷; in some larger and uninspired records which have perished. The present work is not in any of the Hebrew copies. It is uncertain in what language it was originally composed; but it cannot be traced higher than to the Vulgate, into which, probably, or into some Greek copies, it was in-

⁶ 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1. 12, 13. et Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. iii. p. 437.

⁷ 2 Chron. xxxiii. 19. Or of Hosai, as it is rendered in the margin of our Bibles. The word חוּי signifies Seers, as the Seventy render it. Some understand it to be the name of a Prophet, and some have thought that Isaiah is meant. The Syriac reads Hanan, the Arabic Saphan. Vid. Grot.

serted by some writer desirous of supplying the loss of the authentic prayer. It was not received as genuine by any of the Fathers or Councils, and was rejected even by the Council of Trent.

The work is, however, written in a style of much piety and humility: and the Greek church has inserted it into its euchology, or collection of prayers. The author of it speaks of repentance in a manner very questionable, as not appointed to the just, as to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; but upon this point he perhaps may be understood only to express a reflection of somewhat similar import to that uttered by our Saviour, when he declared that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance ⁸.

⁸ Matt. ix. 13.

OF THE
FIRST BOOK OF THE
MACCABEES.

THE First Book of the Maccabees contains a collection of historical particulars relating to the Jews, from the beginning of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, A.M. 3829, to the death of Simon the high-priest, A.M. 3869. It is supposed to have been originally written in the Hebrew, or rather in the Jerusalem dialect, corrupted by an intermixture of Chaldee, as used by the Jews after the return from captivity. The author is by some thought to have been John Hyrcanus, the son of Simon; who was a prince and high-priest of the Jews nearly thirty years, and who began his government at the period at which this history concludes. Josephus¹, indeed, informs us, that the high-priests were intrusted with the care of writing the annals of their country; and at the period of the Maccabees, great attention seems to have been paid to preserve them². The author of the present book, who was probably some

¹ Cont. Apion. lib. i. p. 1332.

² 1 Macc. xvi. 24. 2 Macc. ii. 14.

person publicly appointed to digest the history, appears to have had recourse to the national records, and sometimes refers to them³. He reckons from a Greek æra, but according to the Hebrew mode of computation⁴. Origen gives us the Hebrew title that appeared at the head of this work, שרביט שר בניאל, "The Sceptre of the Prince of the Sons of God;" a title which obviously alludes to Judas, the valiant defender of God's persecuted people⁵. St. Jerom professes to have seen this work in Hebrew or Syriac. This original, however, is now lost. The Greek version, from which our English translation was made, is denominated Maccabees, from the persons whose actions are described in the work. It was probably executed before the time of Theodotion, for it appears to have been used by authors who were his contemporaries⁶. In the Paris and London Polyglots, there are two Syriac versions of both the books of the Maccabees, which were made from the Greek, though they differ from it in some respects.

The two books of the Maccabees were certainly composed after the succession of Prophets had ceased among the Jews⁷; and were never reckoned by them in the catalogue of the sacred writings. They were not cited by our Saviour, or his apostles; and were considered as apocryphal by the primitive church, since

Chap. xvi. 24.

⁴ The author calculates from the month Nisan, (March or April,) the Greeks reckon from October.

Vide Origen. apud Euseb. l. vi. c. xxv. Hieron. Prol. Gal. Some read the title שרביט סר בנו אל, The Sceptre of the Rebels against God.

⁶ As by Origen and Tertullian.

⁷ 1 Macc. iv. 46. ix. 27. xiv. 41. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. p. 1333. Parker's Introd. ad Bib. Vossius. Kidder, &c.

they are not mentioned in the list of the canonical books furnished by Melito, the Council of Laodicea, Hilary, and Cyril of Jerusalem⁸; they are expressly represented as works of a secondary rank by many very ancient writers⁹; and were received as such by Augustin, and the Council of Carthage¹, (though indeed enumerated in the 47th canon with the canonical books;) notwithstanding which they were pronounced to be in every respect canonical by the Council of Trent.

This first book is much followed by Josephus, and cited as a respectable history by the Fathers². It was probably written by a contemporary author, who had, in part, witnessed the scenes which he so minutely and graphically describes; and who wrote under a lively impression of the revolutions which his country had recently experienced. It is composed, at least, with great accuracy and spirit, and perhaps approaches nearer to the style of sacred history than any work now extant. St. John has been thought to substantiate

⁸ Preface to the Apocryphal Books in this work, and Cosin's Canon of Scripture.

⁹ Origen ap. Euseb. Hist. lib. vi. c. xxv. Athan. Synop. tom. ii. p. 201. Hieron. Præfat. in Libros Salomon. tom. i. p. 938. Gregor. Mag. Moral. Expos. in Job, tom. i. p. 622. edit. Paris, 1705. Junil. African. de Part. Div. Leg. apud Bib. Patr. tom. vi. par. 2. lib. i. c. iii. p. 199.

¹ August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. xxxvi. quos non Judæi sed Ecclesia pro Canonicis habet. Concil. Carthag. 3. Can. 47. In the printed copies of the pretended decree of Pope Gelasius, only one book of the Maccabees is mentioned.

² Antiq. lib. xii. cap. vi. et sequent. Tertull. adv. Jud. c. iv. p. 187. edit. Lutet. Paris, 1664. Cyprian Epist. lv. p. 80. edit. Par. 1726.

the truth of a relation herein furnished ³; and Josephus appears to have copied most of its accounts into his *Jewish Antiquities*; and though the author has been represented in a few instances as betraying some ignorance in treating of foreign affairs ⁴, yet in other respects, many heathen writers corroborate his reports. It is to be observed, however, that the first book differs in some points from the second, and from the accounts of Josephus ⁵.

The book contains the history of Mattathias, and of his family, and of the wars which they at the head of their countrymen, maintained against the Kings of Syria, in defence of their religion and lives. From the death of Alexander, who had conquered Persia, and the countries dependent on that empire ⁶, Judæa followed the fate of Syria; and for a space of near one hundred and fifty years was exposed to all the ambitious contests which prevailed between the kings of Syria and Egypt. After various revolutions, and alternate subjection to each of these kingdoms; and after having occasionally suffered all the oppressions and exactions

³ St. John represents Jesus to have been present at the feast of the dedication; by which has been understood the feast of the dedication of the altar, of which the institution is recorded in this book. Some have thought, that as this feast commenced on the twenty-fifth of December, it might have been pre-ordained with a reference to our Saviour's birth. The Jews celebrated this feast, which they called the feast of the lights, for eight days, with illuminations and great joy. Vid. John x. 22. 1 Macc. iv. 56—59. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. c. vii.

⁴ Chap. i. 5, 6. viii. 6—9. Rainold's Censur. Apoc. Prælect. 98. 104.

⁵ Comp. 1 Macc. vi. 8—16. with 2 Macc. i. 13—16. and ix. 26.

⁶ Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. viii. &c.

that tyranny could enforce by means of the high-priests, and those princes who were appointed by the interest, and subject to the control of the conquerors, Judæa was at the time that this history begins, a tributary province of Syria, under Antiochus Epiphanes; and cruelly harassed and pillaged by him. The severe persecution which he exercised, and his avowed designs, which tended to exterminate the religion, and indeed the whole nation of the Jews⁷, inflamed the zeal of Mattathias to resentment and revolt; and upon his death, excited Judas, in compliance with the dying injunctions of his father, to attempt the deliverance of his country. The successive victories, and prudent conduct of Judas and his brethren, which effected the accomplishment of their designs, constitute the chief subject of the present book. The relation affords a lively picture of a nation animated by the patriotic heroism of its leaders, and struggling with enthusiasm for civil and religious liberty. It represents Judas and his brethren, anxious to “restore the decayed estate of the people,” and to purify the polluted sanctuary of their God; as endeavouring by measures concerted in piety, and conducted with steady fortitude, to conciliate the divine countenance. It describes, likewise, the gradual recovery of Judæa from desolation and miseries to importance and prosperity⁸, and, at the same time, the re-establishment of the worship of the true God on the ruins of idolatry.

The author, like the sacred historians, selects individual characters for consideration, and describes the

⁷ Chap. i. 41—64. iii. 34—36.

⁸ Chap. i. 25—28. iii. 42—51. comp. with chap. x. xii. 19—23 xiv. 8—23. xv. 1—9. 24. 32.

misconduct, as well as the virtues of his heroes. He treats of the affairs of other nations only so far as they are connected with the circumstances of the Jewish history; and exhibits the changes and vicissitudes of other governments, as they tended to affect the interests of his country.

The particulars recorded in the book, have been thought often to afford a key to prophecy⁹; and especially to explain the mysterious visions contained in the eighth and eleventh chapters of Daniel, relating to the horn, by which emblem it is supposed was, in the first instance, presignified Antiochus¹, who set up the abomination of desolation on the altar², but who himself was only a type of a more fatal enemy to the church.

⁹ Comp. 1 Macc. x. 88, 89. with Zech. ix. 13—17. and Jackson's works, vol. ii. p. 844. edit. London, 1673. Vid. also 1 Macc. vii. 17. where the second and third verses of Psalm lxxix. are cited, either by way of accommodation to the circumstances before described; or as intentionally prophetic (perhaps in a secondary sense,) of the slaughter effected by Alcimus. The Hebrew word חסידים, indeed, which is translated "of thy saints" in the second verse of the Psalm, has been considered as descriptive of the Asidæans (or Chasidæans) who were eminently pious. The Psalm might, perhaps, have been historical of the calamities occasioned by Nebuchadnezzar, and yet like many others, have borne a prophetic aspect to future circumstances.

¹ Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. xi. p. 466. Hieron. in Dan. c. viii.

² Chap. i. 54, 55. By "the abomination of desolation," which as Daniel had predicted was set upon the altar, has been understood the idol that was placed there by order of Antiochus. This is supposed to have been the statue of Jupiter Olympius. Vid. 2 Macc. vi. 2. Idols in Scripture are commonly called abominations. Vid. 1 Kings xi. 5. 7. And the idol might be said to make desolate, as it expelled the worship of the true God, and occasioned the destruction of his servants. Comp. Dan. xi. 31. with 1 Macc. i. 54. and

Mattathias, the father of Judas, was of the sacerdotal race, of the course of Joarib³; and as is generally supposed, a descendant of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, to whom God had given the covenant of an everlasting priesthood⁴. He himself does not appear to have enjoyed that exalted office⁵; though it was conferred on his sons; and restricted as an exclusive privilege to his descendants till the typical office was virtually put an end to by the institution of a spiritual priesthood in the time of Herod; who, except in the case of Aristobulus, the grandson of Hyrcanus, did not respect the pretensions of the Asmonæan family, but conceded the priesthood to any of the sacerdotal lineage⁶.

Judas, whose exploits are celebrated in this history, has been thought to have derived his title of Maccabæus from the initial letters of the four words with which his standard is supposed to have been decorated⁷,

2 Macc. vi. 1, 2. Our Saviour seems emphatically to apply this description to the approaching profanation by the standard of the Roman armies at the final destruction of the temple, and it is remarkable that Josephus, while he considers the sufferings of the Jews under Antiochus as verifying the prophecies of Daniel, subjoins that the prophet wrote also concerning the Roman power, and that the Jewish nation should be desolated (*ἐρημωθήσεται*) by them. See Matt. xxiv. 15. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. xi. p. 466.

³ Chap. ii. 1. or Jahoiarib. This was the first of the twenty-four courses which served in the temple. Vid. 1 Chron. xxiv. 7.

⁴ Numb. xxv. 11—13. 1 Macc. ii. 54. Jurieu's Critic. Hist. vol. i. part iii. c. i. p. 372.

⁵ Calmet, Dict. word Mattathias.

⁶ Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. c. ix. p. 901.

⁷ Others, who think that Judas was named Maccabæus before he erected his standard; or who collect from monuments that a lion was imprinted on the standard of the Maccabees, derive the word Maccabæus from *מכה בי*, "per me est plaga." Vid. Godwyn de

and which were taken from the eleventh verse of the fifteenth chapter of Exodus, **מִי כַמֶּנֶּה בְּאֵלִים יְהוָה**; “Who is like unto thee among the gods, O Jehovah?” from this Judas and his descendants were called Maccabees. They were called, likewise, Asamonæans, either because, as Josephus informs us, Mattathias was a descendant of Asamonæus⁸; or by an honourable and eminent distinction, as the Hebrew word signifies princes⁹. Many writers maintain, that they were descended maternally from the race of Judah¹. Aristobulus, the son of Hyrcanus, was the first who assumed the title of king after the captivity. Although the sceptre was thus transferred from Judah, a lawgiver did not depart from between his feet till the Shiloh came; since the princes of that tribe continued, occasionally, if not generally, to be selected to preside over the Sanhedrim², which administered to the construction and execution of the law, and imposed some restraint on

Repub. Jud. lib. i. c. 1. Some derive it from Macchabeth, or Mucchubeth, “hidden,” because Mattathias and his companions concealed themselves in the wilderness. Vid. chap. ii. 28—31. Others, lastly, derive it from Makke-Baiah, which signifies “Conqueror in the Lord.” Vid. Prid. An. 166. et Calmet on 1 Matt. ii. 4. Ben Gorion, lib. iii. c. ii.

⁸ Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. c. vi. p. 534. edit. Huds.

⁹ Chasamanim, vid. Psalm lxviii. 32. It is rendered *Πρέσβεις* in the Septuagint of Psalm lxvii. p. 31. Vid. Kimchi. Drus. Præf. in Maccab. Euseb. Demonstr. Evang. lib. viii. p. 393-4. edit. Par. 1628. See also p. 370, &c.

¹ August. cont. Faust. lib. i. c. lxxii. &c. Preface to the Historical Books in this work.

² Vide Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. xi. p. 588. Tzemach David ad annum 728. Millenarii 4. Vide also Joseph. de Voisin Procœmium Pugio Fidei, p. 12. edit. Lipsiæ, 1687. Witsius Miscellan. Sacr. Præf. § 29.

the sovereign. He bequeathed the crown to his son, after whose death it became a subject of contest to his children; and on the capture of Hyrcanus the elder, by the Parthians, it was conferred by the Romans on Herod³.

³ Sulpit. Sever. Sacr. Hist. lib. ii. p. 362. edit. Lugd. Bat. p. 1647.

OF THE
SECOND BOOK OF THE
MACCABEES.

THIS Book contains a compilation of historical records extracted from different works; but especially an abridgment of the history of the persecutions carried on by Epiphanes and Eupator¹ against the Jews, which had been written in Greek in five books, by an Hellenistical Jew of Cyrene, named Jason, (a descendant probably of one of those Jews who had been placed there by Ptolemy Soter²;) and which is no longer extant. The name of the compiler is not known. He was doubtless a different person from the author of the preceding book. He dates from an æra six months later than that chosen by him, and not only writes with less accuracy, and in a more florid style, but likewise relates some particulars in a manner inconsistent with

¹ Ch. ii. 19—29. Clemens Alexandrinus calls it the epitome of the Maccabaic history. Vid. Strom. lib. v. p. 705. edit. Potter.

² Prid. Con. Par. i. book viii. an. 320. The Cyreneans were of Greek extraction. Callimachus, the Poet of Cyrene, wrote in Greek. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. c. i. p. 507.

the accounts of the first book³; from which, nevertheless, he has in other instances borrowed both sentiments and facts. Some writers have attributed this second book to Philo of Alexandria⁴; and others to Josephus, on grounds equally conjectural and fallacious. Neither Eusebius nor Jerom speak of it as among the works of Philo; and the discourse of the Maccabees, or the Empire of Reason, which Eusebius and Jerom suppose to have been written by Josephus⁵, is a very different work, though it mentions many particulars contained in this book.

Serarius⁶ maintained that the Second Book of Maccabees was the production of Judas, the Essenian, who is described by Josephus as a man of great authority for his wisdom; who, likewise, according to the his-

³ Comp. 1 Macc. vi. 13—16. with 2 Macc. i. 16. and ix. 28. 1 Macc. ix. 3. 18. with 2 Macc. i. 10. 1 Macc. iv. 36. with 2 Macc. x. 2, 3. et Usher.

⁴ Honor. Augustod. de Scriptor. Eccl. in Philon, p. 999. apud Bibliothec. Patr. tom. xii. edit. Colon. Agrip. 1618.

⁵ Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. x. Hieron. adv. Pelag. lib. i. p. 514. tom. iv. edit. Par. 1706. et Lib. de Imperio Rationis, in Joseph. This book, whether properly or improperly attributed to Josephus, is entitled, *εἰς Μακκαβαίωνος λόγος, ἢ περὶ αὐτοκράτορος λογισμοῦ*. The word Maccabees being applied to all who distinguished themselves in the cause of religion and freedom; and sometimes, as in this instance, to those who flourished before the time of Judas. Vid. Scaliger in Chron. Euseb. n. 1853. p. 143. The work of Josephus is a rhetorical declamation on the power of reason, acting on religious principles; in which the author illustrates his subject by a description of the conduct and speeches of Eleazar, and the other martyrs whose fortitude is celebrated in this Second Book of Maccabees.

⁶ Serarius, Prol. II. in Macc. et Rupert. de Vict. Verbi Dei, lib. x. cap. xv. p. 690. edit. Paris, 1638.

torian's account, was endowed with the infallible spirit of prophecy⁷, and predicted the death of Antigonus, the second son of John Hyrcanus the Priest; and who, as Serarius imagines, is mentioned in the fourteenth verse of the second chapter of this book. But that passage is generally allowed to relate to Judas Maccabæus; and affords no light with respect to the author of this work. It is with more probability, though still with uncertainty, assigned to Simon, or Judas Maccabæus; while some have imagined that the whole book is only a letter written by the synagogue of Jerusalem to the Jews in Egypt; not distinguishing the historical from the epistolary parts⁸. By whomsoever it was composed, it should seem to have been originally written in Greek; and the compiler, as well as the author, whose work he abridged, follows the Syrian mode of computation, reckoning by the years of the Seleucidæ⁹.

The two epistles which are contained in the first and second chapters, and which are there said to have been written by the Jews at Jerusalem to their brethren at Alexandria, exhorting them to observe the feast of the Tabernacles, and that of the Purification, are by Prideaux considered as spurious; the second, indeed, is said to have been written by Judas, who was not living at the time of the alleged date¹; and it contains many

⁷ Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. xi. p. 589. de Bell. Jud. lib. i. c. iii. p. 964.

⁸ Genebr. Chronol. Coteler. Not. ad Can. Apost. p. 388.

⁹ Prideaux conceives, that the compiler must have been an Egyptian Jew, since he seems to have acknowledged the lesser temple in Egypt, for he distinguishes the temple at Jerusalem as "the great temple." Vid. chap. ii. 19. xiv. 13. Prid. Connect. part ii. book iii. p. 265. An. 166.

¹ Comp. 1 Macc. ix. 3. 18. with 2 Macc. i. 10.

extravagant and fabulous particulars. It begins at the tenth verse of the first chapter, and terminates with the eighteenth of the second; from thence to the end of the chapter is a short preface of the compiler, prefixed to the abridgment of Jason's history; which commences with the third chapter, and concludes with the thirty-seventh verse of the fifteenth chapter, the two last verses forming a kind of conclusion to the work.

The book contains a history of about fifteen years, from the enterprise of Heliodorus in the temple, A.M. 3828, to the victory of Judas Maccabæus over Nicanor, A.M. 3843. The chapters are not, however, arranged exactly in chronological order. The work begins at a period somewhat earlier than that of the first book of Maccabees. As the author appears at first to have intended only an epitome of the history of Judas Maccabæus and his brethren, with some contemporary events², the account of the punishment of Heliodorus, which occurred under Seleucus, the predecessor of Epiphanes, as well as the circumstances related in the two last chapters which happened under Demetrius Soter, the successor of Eupator, have been sometimes represented as additions made by some later writer: but since these events, as connected with the time of Judas, were not irrelative to the author's design, there is no reason, except from a pretended difference of style, to dispute their authenticity as a part of Jason's history; or, at least, as a genuine addition affixed to the epitome by the compiler. The author has no title, any more than the writer of the preceding book, to be

² Chap. ii. 19—23.

considered as an inspired historian : he speaks, indeed, of his performance in the diffident style of one who was conscious of the fallibility of his own judgment, and distrustful of his own powers³. His work was never considered as strictly canonical till received into the sacred list by the Council of Trent, though examples are produced from it by many ancient writers⁴. It must be allowed to be a valuable and instructive history ; and it affords an interesting description of a persecuted and afflicted people : presenting in the relation of the conduct of Eleazar, and of the woman and her children who suffered for their attachment to their religion, illustrations of constancy that might have animated the martyrs of the Christian church. The author industriously displays the confidence in a resurrection and future life⁵ which prevailed at the period of his history, and which was the encouragement that enabled those who were so severely tried, to sustain their tortures. He likewise, perhaps, more particularly enforced the doctrine of a resurrection with design to counteract the propagation of the Sadducean principles, which were then rising into notice. There are, however, passages of exceptionable tendency in the book.

It has been thought to detract from the credibility of the particulars recorded in this book, that neither

³ Chap. xv. 38. which is written in the style of an uninspired writer, and resembles the conclusion of the oration of *Æschines* against *Ctesiphon*.

⁴ Ambrose de Jacob. et Vita Beat. c. x. xi. xii. p. 474. edit. Par. 1686. et lib. de Offic. c. xl. xli. p. 52. August. de Cur. gerend. pro Mortuis, lib. i. § 3.

⁵ Chap. vii. 9. 11. 14. 23. 29. 36. and xiv. 46.

the author of the preceding work, or Josephus in those his acknowledged writings, in which he treats of the persecution carried on by Antiochus ⁶, should mention the sufferings of the martyrs whose memorial is here celebrated. But the silence of these historians cannot afford any sufficient argument to prove that there was not, at least, some groundwork for the account of this book, with whatever exaggerations we may suppose it to have been decorated. The description, likewise, of the prodigies and meteorological conflicts which portended calamities to Judæa, ought not to invalidate our confidence in the veracity of the writer of this book; since it is unquestionable from the testimony of respectable historians ⁷, and agreeable to the representation of holy writ ⁸, that they should sometimes take place: and when, as in this instance, the phænomena are represented by an historian, perhaps nearly contemporary with the events, to have continued forty days ⁹, it is unreasonable to suspect delusion, or wilful misrepresentation. So, likewise, however improbable those accounts may appear, in which God is described to have vindicated the insulted sanctity of his temple ¹, and to have discountenanced the adversaries of his people by apparitions and angelical visions ², it is certain that many philosophical and judicious writers have maintained the reality of similar appearances ³; and that

⁶ De Bell. Jud. lib. i. c. i. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. c. v.

⁷ Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. iv. c. iv. p. 1181. lib. vii. c. v. p. 1303. Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. xiii.

⁸ Joel ii. 31. Matt. xxiv. 29. Mark xiii. 24. Luke xxi. 25.

⁹ Ch. v. 1—3. ¹ Ch. iii. 24—29. ² Ch. x. 29, 30. xi. 8.

³ Cicero de Natur. Deor. lib. ii. § 2. p. 436. edit. Par. See also Tuscul. Quæst. lib. i. See 2 Kings vi. 17.

the popular superstitions and belief in such apparitions may, without credulity, be supposed to have originated in the miraculous interpositions which were sometimes displayed in favour of the Jewish people⁴, though there be not sufficient authority in this book to warrant us in placing those here recorded among the number.

But though the book may, perhaps, be vindicated in general, with respect to historical truth, it contains some parts of exceptionable character; and some passages in it have been objected to as of dangerous example⁵. The Romanists, indeed, who in deference to the decision of the Tridentine fathers, admit the canonical authority of the book, have produced the last verses of the twelfth chapter to countenance (though some think they do not) their notions concerning mass, purgatory, and prayers for the dead⁶, with a view to reconciliation and deliverance from sin.

The work, as the production of a fallible and unenlightened man, may contain a mixture of error; and certainly should be read with that discretion, which,

⁴ Joshua v. 13.

⁵ Ch. i. 18—36. et Rainold's *Censur. Apocryph.* tom. ii. Prælect. 133, 134. Vid. also ch. xiv. 41—46. where the furious attempt of Razis to fall on his own sword is spoken of with seeming approbation.

⁶ Bellarm. de Purgat. lib. ii. c. xv. p. 661. Opera, tom. ii. edit. Colon. Agrippinæ, 1620. Some think that Judas is commended for having prayed, not for the dead, but that the guilt of the dead might not be imputed to the living; but though the Greek be less favourable to the doctrine of the Romish church than the Vulgate, it must be confessed that the passage will not admit of that construction. Judas, probably, did not dream of purgatory; but he is certainly represented to have prayed for the dead; and in the Greek, as well as in the Latin, the reconciliation is said to have been made for the purpose of delivering the dead from sin.

while it seeks instruction, guards against the intrusion of false and pernicious opinions. If St. Paul, in his eulogium on some illustrious patterns of faith, should be thought to have established the truth, or approved the examples in this history, he by no means bears testimony to the inspiration of its author⁷; or establishes its general authority in point of doctrine. The Apostles consecrated for the direction of the Christian church, the productions of only those “religious men who were moved by the Holy Ghost.” Augustin justly remarked, in answer to the Circumcellion Donatists⁸, who had urged the desperate attempt of Razis⁹, in defence of suicide; that they must have been hard pressed for examples, to have recourse to the book of Maccabees; for that this book was of subordinate authority, as not established on the testimony of the Jewish church, or on that of Christ; and was received by the Christian church only to be discreetly read; and further, that Razis, however distinguished for valour, was not to be proposed as an example to justify self-murder¹. The Fathers in general, indeed, cite the

⁷ It is stated in the nineteenth verse of the sixth chapter, that Eleazer, *αὐθαίρετως ἐπὶ τὸ τύμπανον προσῆγεν*. And St. Paul, speaking of martyrs who had suffered in hopes of a resurrection, says, *ἄλλοι δὲ ἐτυμπανίσθησαν*, from which expression some conceive that the apostle alludes to the death of Eleazer, supposing *τύμπανον* to signify some specific engine of torture. If the apostle did refer to the account of this book, which is a point much controverted, it will only prove that the relation is true. See Heb. xi. 35.

⁸ These were a party of confederated ruffians of the fourth century, who practised and defended assassinations, and who recommended suicide when it could rescue them from public punishment. Vid. Mosheim, Eccles. Hist. cent. iv. part ii. c. v. S. 5. ⁹ Ch. xiv. 41.

¹ August. Epist. 204. p. 766. tom. ii. edit. Paris, 1688. Cosin's Scholastical Hist. § 81.

book as a useful history²; but not as of authority in point of doctrine.

There are two other books entitled the Third and Fourth Books of Maccabees. That which is improperly styled the third, and which in point of time should be considered as the first, describes the persecution of Ptolemy Philopater against the Jews in Egypt, about A.M. 3789; and the miraculous delivery of those who were exposed in the Hypodrome of Alexandria to the fury of elephants. This is a work entitled to much respect; it is in the most ancient manuscript copies of the Septuagint³, and is cited by the Fathers⁴, but never having been found in the Vulgate, which version was universally used in the Western church, and from which our first translations were made, it never was admitted into our Bibles. Grotius supposes it to have been written soon after the book of Ecclesiasticus. The history is not noticed by Josephus; though in the ancient version of his second book against Apion by Rufinus, there are some particulars which allude to it.

The book, which is usually called the Fourth Book of the Maccabees, and which contains a history of the pontificate of John Hyrcanus, was first published in the Paris Polyglot as an Arabic history of the Maccabees. It is supposed to have been a translation of

² Cyprian. de Exhort. Martyr. p. 269. Testim. l. iii. § 4. p. 305. edit. Par. 1726.

³ It is in the Alexandrian manuscript in the Museum, and in the Vatican manuscript at Rome.

⁴ Euseb. Chron. an. 1800. Theod. in Dan. xi. 7. p. 682. edit. Par. 1642. Canon. Apost. 85. Athan. Synop. tom. ii. p. 201. edit. Par. 1698. Niceph. vid. Arabic Version, Paris Polyglot.

the work seen by Sixtus Senensis ⁵ in a Greek manuscript at Lyons, and which was afterwards burnt; though, according to Calmet's account ⁶, it should seem to have been a different work from that mentioned by early writers as a fourth book of the Maccabees ⁷. It appears to have been originally written in Hebrew; and the Arabic writer, or the Greek translator, (from whose version the Arabic was made,) lived after the destruction of the second temple by the Romans, as may be collected from some particulars. The book differs in many respects from the relations of Josephus. Calmet thinks that the Discourse on the Power of Reason, before mentioned as the work of Josephus, was the original fourth book of Maccabees, which in many Greek manuscripts is placed with the other three ⁸.

It may be added, that in two ancient Hebrew manuscripts in the Bodleian library, as also in one at Leipsic, there follows after Esther, as a book of the Bible, without any title or introduction, a history of the Maccabees, written in Chaldee, which differs widely from our apocryphal books. It appears to have been originally composed in Chaldee, and rendered into Hebrew. It is probably a very ancient production, and contains many remarkable particulars ⁹.

⁵ Sixt. Senen. Bib. Sanct. lib. i. p. 31. et Bib. Maxim. a Fran. de la Haye. Selden. de Success. in Pontif. c. x. p. 126.

⁶ Calmet, Préface sur le Quatrième Livre des Maccab.

⁷ Athan. Synop. p. 201. tom. ii. edit. Par. 1698. Vid. Cotel. Not. in Can. Apost. p. 117. 138.

⁸ Cambesis in Joseph. Lib. de Imper. Ration. Cotel. Not. in Can. Apost. p. 339.

⁹ The Hebrew copy has been published in a very corrupt state by Bartolocci. Vid. Kennicott, No. 18, Pentat. Psal. Megill. 80. p. 55, 56. on Hebrew and Samaritan manuscripts, p. 54.

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